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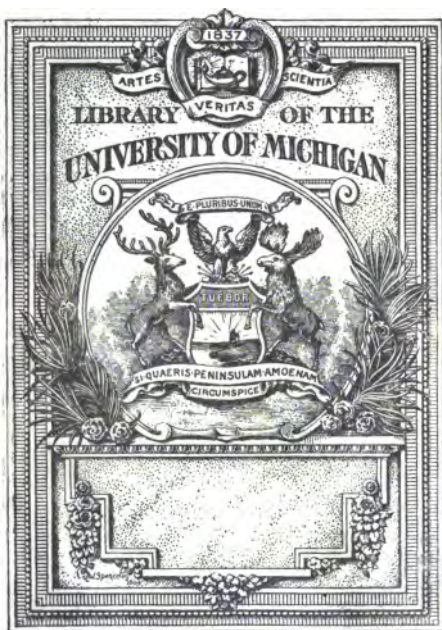
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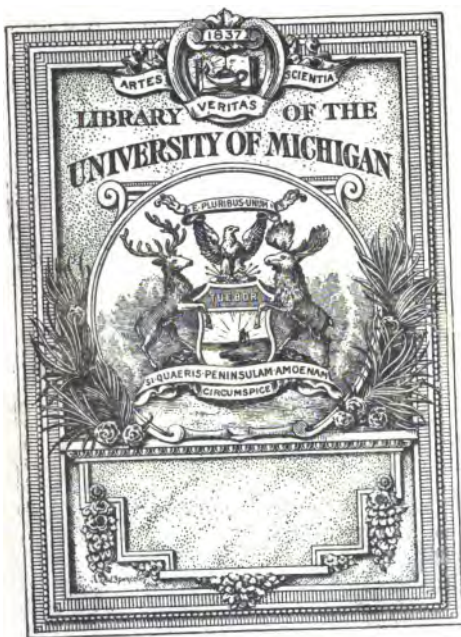


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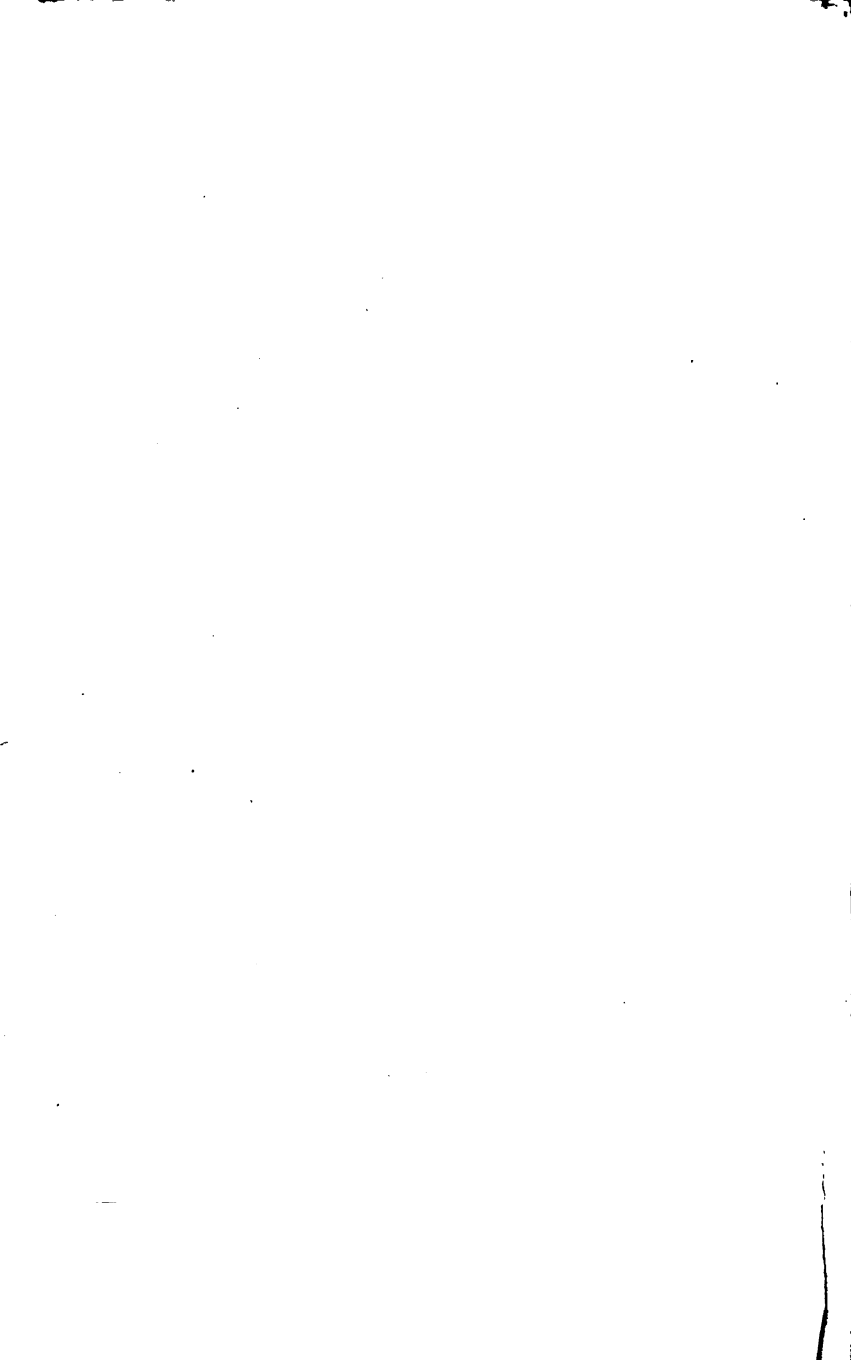
THE
DRAMATIC WORKS
OF
JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
G. ROUTLEDGE & CO. FARRINGDON STREET;
NEW YORK: 18, BEEKMAN STREET.

1856.



14 July '11 - R.B.R.

By Permission,
THESE VOLUMES OF MY COLLECTED DRAMATIC WORKS
ARE RESPECTFULLY AND GRATEFULLY DEDICATED
TO HER ROYAL HIGHNESS
THE DUCHESS OF KENT,
BY
HER ROYAL HIGHNESS'S MUCH INDEBTED AND MOST OBEDIENT
HUMBLE SERVANT,
JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE very marked favour which the dramatic works of Mr. SHERIDAN KNOWLES, both as acting and as closet plays, have met with from the public, and the circumstance that, both separately and in a collected form, these have long since been out of print, and, consequently, become rare, have induced the Publishers (who have acquired the entire copyright) to issue the present elegant and extremely cheap edition, of which the text has undergone a thorough revision by the Author, who has, in numerous instances, altered and amended it. Having thus, at a considerable cost, endeavoured to supply a deficiency much felt, the Publishers, not unreasonably, consider that they thereby render a service to the standard literature of the Nation; since it has been long ago admitted, and by no less authority than that of the Edinburgh Reviewers, that Mr. Knowles "is, indeed, the most successful dramatist of this day;" and that, apart from his other efforts, "'The Hunchback' and 'The Wife' deserve a permanent station in our drama, having combined the greatest literary merit with the most unequivocal success upon the stage."

A critic, also, of no common sagacity, in the *Athenæum* of February, 1847, has characterized Mr. Knowles as "a writer as full of individuality as

of geniality, who has been popular without coarse conception, and received as a poet without making any extraordinary pretensions. The first and last cause of his well-deserved popularity as a dramatist, is the heartiness of his writings. * * * The *heart* which Mr. Knowles puts into his work lays hold of the hearts of his public ; and this is his secret.

* * * * *

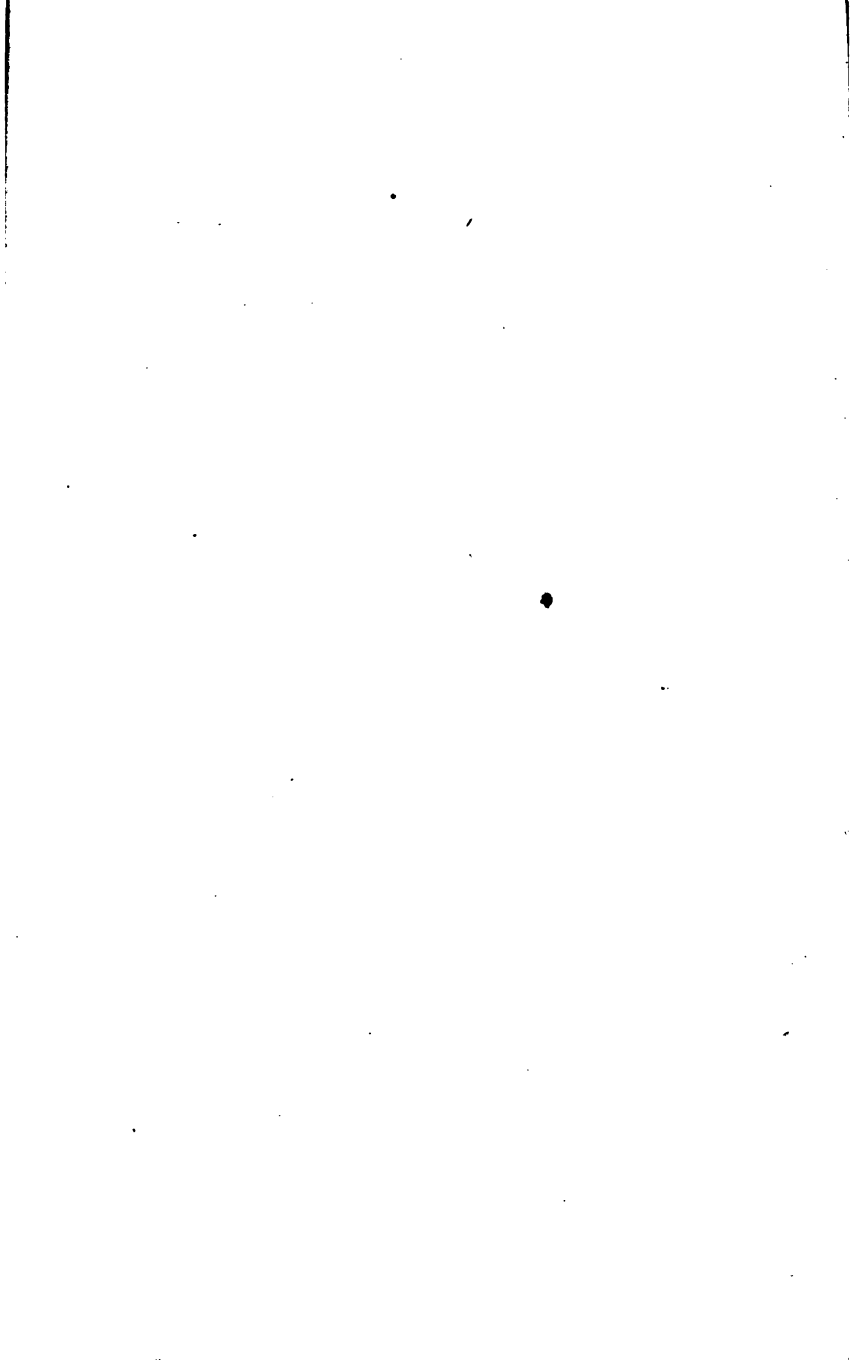
In fine, counting Burns at the head of the Uneducated Poets (an epithet, as we have often said, to which the freest meaning must be allowed), we think that Mr. Sheridan Knowles will keep his place in the annals of the British Theatre as the King of Uneducated Dramatists. He takes pride, if we mistake not, in nature as superior to art ; at least, he never fails to assert such as his creed. He will, therefore, we imagine and hope, not feel aggrieved at the position which we assign to him among the poets of his country."

Such criticism, neither partial nor exaggerated, seems fully to corroborate the Publishers in their own estimate of the propriety of the present edition, even had the demand for it been other than it really is.

2, FARRINGTON STREET.

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CAIUS GRACCHUS:

A Tragedy.

TO JOHN PATTERSON, ESQ.,

BRIDGE STREET, BLACKFRIARS,

MY DEAR SIR,

At your suggestion I wrote this Tragedy, and to you
I dedicate it.

With best wishes for your happiness, and that of your
family,

I am, my dear Sir,

Your obliged and faithful Friend and Servant,

J. S. KNOWLES.

GLASGOW;
November, 1823.

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

(AS ORIGINALLY PERFORMED AT DRURY LANE IN 1824.)

<i>Flaminius</i>	} Consuls	{	Mr. THOMPSON.
<i>Opimius</i>			Mr. ARCHER.
<i>Fannius</i>	} Patricians	{	Mr. POWELL.
<i>Tuditanus</i>			Mr. WEBSTER.
<i>Caius Gracchus</i> ..	} Tribunes.....	{	Mr. MACREADY.
<i>Drusus</i>			Mr. POPE.
<i>Læcinus</i>	} Friends of Caius Gracchus	{	Mr. PENLEY.
<i>Pomponius</i>			Mr. MERCER.
<i>Vettius</i>			Mr. YOUNGE.
<i>Fulvius Flaccus</i>			Mr. YARNOLD.
<i>Titus</i>	} Plebeians	{	Mr. TERRY.
<i>Probus</i>			Mr. W. WILLIAMS.
<i>Marcus</i>			Mr. GATTIE.
<i>Sextus</i>	} Servants to the Patricians	{	Mr. FITZWILLIAM.
<i>Quintus</i>			Mr. HUGHES.
<i>Lucius</i>	} Page to Caius Gracchus	{	Miss CARR.
<i>Cornelia</i>			
	} Mother of Caius Gracchus	{	Mrs. BUNN.
<i>Licinia</i>	} Wife of Caius Gracchus	{	Mrs. W. WEST.
<i>Livia</i>	Friend of Licinia		Miss SMITHSON.
<i>Lucilla</i>	An Attendant.		

Priests, Lictors, Soldiers, Citizens, &c.

CAIUS GRACCHUS.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Street in Rome—six Citizens discovered.*

Enter MARCUS and TITUS, looking occasionally back, as if observing something passing behind them.

Mar. Who is that next him in mourning?

Tit. His nephew; the rest are common friends.

Poor Vettius! no one will plead for him.

Mar. Peace! they are coming on.

Enter VETTIUS and his four Friends, in mourning, followed by PROBUS and twelve other Citizens.

Vet. Weep not, my friends, for me; for Rome—for Rome
Reserve your tears. Her pride is turn'd to shame;
Her wealth to poverty; her strength to weakness;
Her fair report into a blasted name;
Her freedom into thralldom. Who would thrive
In Rome, let him forget what honour is,
Truth, reverence for the gods, respect for man!
Ay, gaze, ye poor, despised sons of Rome!
That crouch to your own power, by men more strong,
Only because more daring, wrenched from you!
Ay, gaze; and see your lovers, one by one,
Cut off; and never curse, unless it be
Your own hands, that you dare not stretch to save them!

[*VETTIUS and his Friends go out.*]

Tit. Masters, we are in a sorrowful plight indeed, when such a friend as Vettius spurns us.

Mar. See! who is that he stops to speak to?

Tit. Know you not? Why, you've seen him as often as you've seen your own hand. 'Tis the senator Fannius—that Fannius, that looks so sweetly on the people, and, for all that, never yet did them a good turn.

Mar. Oh! is it he?

Tit. To be sure it is! See how he leans to Vettius, and seems to pity him. I warrant you there's a tear in his eye now, although his heart would laugh to tell you how it came there. See, he puts his hand upon his breast; that's an appeal to his honesty, which is always sure to be out of the way,

whenever any one else happens to call upon it. Oh, he's a proper patrician!

Mar. Think you they will condemn Vettius?

Tit. Think you he is a friend to the people?

Mar. Who doubts that he is?

Tit. Who doubts, then, they will condemn him?

Mar. See! Fannius quits him.

Tit. And he's as much his friend as ever he was. His absence will profit him just as much as his presence.—Yonder comes Licinius, the brother-in-law of Caius Gracchus. Who knows but Caius will speak for Vettius, who was his brother Tiberius's friend?

Mar. Not he! He never appears in the assemblies of the people.

Pro. No; he loves to keep house better. He is married, you know; and his wife is a fair woman. No wonder he prefers her company to ours.

Mar. Do they say he is a man of any parts?

Tit. Yes; he assisted his brother Tiberius once, when he was tribune; and he was thought to be of great promise. 'Tis said he is much given to study.

Mar. 'Twould seem so, indeed; and that he had not yet found out it was the patricians who murdered his brother. I would have taken more revenge for a cur of mine that had been lamed, than Caius took for his brother that was murdered. What revenge did he take? None! He kept house, while the patricians buried his brother in the Tiber! Rome has nothing to hope from him.

Pro. Nay, that's certain. He'll never die for the people.

Mar. Die! No, nor live neither.

Tit. Silence! Licinius is here.

Enter LICINIUS and CAIUS GRACCHUS.

Lic. Health to you, master!

Mar. Health to Licinius!

Caius. [*To LICINIUS.*] The people look coldly on me.

Lic. Hang them! They show fine airs at their own handiwork. I'll speak to them.

Caius. Gently, I pray you; they are bare and hungry, houseless and friendless, and my heart bleeds for them.

Lic. What is the cause of your collecting?

Lit. We come to see Vettius condemned.

Lic. Why do you say condemned? The laws are to try him. He will have justice.

Mar. Ay, from the patricians!

Lic. What of the patricians? Are not the patricians just?

Mar. Not to the people.

Lic. Why not?

Mar. Because they have the power to be otherwise. They have as great dominion over the people, as over their oxen; and so they treat them like their oxen,—unhite them, hack them up, and feed upon them.

Lic. Are the people, then, no better than their oxen, that they endure all this?

Mar. What can the people do? They have no friends that will speak or act for them. The people can do nothing of themselves—they have no power. If the people could find friends—

Lic. Peace! peace! If you gain friends, you lose them straight.

Whoe'er would die for you, you let him die!
You shrug, you shiver, and you whine; but he
That pities you, has need, himself, of pity.
You make a big shout, and a frightful face;
But in your deeds are little to be feared.

Mar. Are you against us, too? You that were Tiberius's friend?

Lic. Who but his friend should be against you? You
That fell from him in danger, who to you
In danger clung? Who would not be against you?
Drowning, you make a cry; and when a hand
Is found to keep your head above the flood,
And bear you safe to land, at the first wave
That booms upon you—idiots in your fear!
You mar his skill, and sink him to the bottom!

Mar. Is that our way?

Lic. Ask you for friends, who to your friends are foes?
In presence, too, of Caius Gracchus, here,
Whose brother you gave up to death?

Mar. We gave!

Lic. Ye gave! When, in the exercise of your rights,
The nobles, with their herd of slaves and clients,
Drove you—a base herd to be so driven!—
With clubs and levers from the market-place,
What did you then? Like spectres, with your fear,
Livid and purged of substance, you glared on,
And saw Tiberius, mangled with their staves,
Into the Tiber thrown, as butchers cast
The offal to the tide.

Caius. No more, Licinius;
Pray you, no more; you are too stern with them.

Lic. Too stern! Would the patricians learn of me,
I'd teach them how to cater for the people.
They should not have a vote. If free-born men

Will crouch like slaves, why would you have them freemen?

Caius. It is his mood, friends; let him be; ne'er mind him.
[LICINIUS and CAIUS GRACCHUS go out.]

Mar. 'Tis plain Licinius is no friend of ours.

Tit. He says the truth. You suffered the patricians and their slaves to murder Tiberius.

Mar. If Licinius is so bitter against us, what must we expect from Caius?

Tit. Yet would he have stopped Licinius when he railed at us.
Who knows but Caius would befriend the people if he could?

Mar. Not he! He'd hang the people if he could.—Come, masters; to the Forum. Farewell, Tiberius! He would not see Vettius accused without defending him.—'Twill be long before we shall see such another friend as Tiberius!

[*They go out.*]

SCENE II.—*The Forum—the Tribunal, on which is the Curule Chair, six Lictors on each side—an Altar—a Rostrum.*

FLAMINIUS, OPIMIUS, TUDITANUS, FANNIUS, and Senators
discovered.

Opi. How would you cure a state o'errun with evils,
But as you'd cleanse a garden rank with weeds?
Up with them by the roots! The slothful hand
That will not bend it to the needful work,
Mars its own ease, and profitless expends
The labour which it grudges. Why falls Tiberius,
If not his coadjutor? Vettius free,
Gracchus should have been free, and Rome a slave.

Fla. Know you what friend he trusts with his defence?

Tud. 'Tis rumour'd, but I say not with what truth,
That, hopeless of acquittal, he will plead
Guilty, and throw himself upon our mercy.

Opi. Our mercy, then, is mercy to ourselves;
In showing which, we dare not pardon him.
Caius, I trust, will not appear for him.

Fan. Not he; he shuns all care of public questions,
And seems to be a mild retiring man.
He is not of the temper of Tiberius;
Or, if he is, he does not emulate
His fate.

Opi. I would not have him speak for Vettius:
His voice would be omnipotent against us.

Fan. See, Vettius is at hand! Opimius,
You will conduct the prosecution.

[*FLAMINIUS ascends the tribunal—the Patricians follow, and remain at the foot of the steps—OPIMIUS goes and ascends the rostrum.*]

Enter VETTIUS with his Friends, followed by TITUS, MARCUS, and Citizens.

Opi. Vettius, stand forth!

Vet. [*Advancing.*] Behold, Opimius,
The sacrifice is ready!

Opi. The false man
Is his own sacrificer. Gentle Romans,
When shall we live as brothers? Is not Rome
Our common mother? Why should we, her sons,
Be foes? Ye powers that favour civil concord,
Prepare your vengeance, for the fratricide
Foments distrust among us.

Tit. Opimius pays the people court.

Mar. Yes, he rides us well. He strokes us when we do not need the spur. Oh, we are gentle beasts!

Opi. You, Spurius Vettius, I accuse of treason.
What answer you?

Vet. That, since the times decree
To innocence, what was in ancient days
The penalty of guilt, I am prepared
To suffer your award, and answer—guilty!

[*Goes under the rostrum.*]

Fla. And waive you all defence?

Vet. When knew you, consul,
A man, already cast, to make defence?
I seem at large, but well am I advised
My cause is tried, and final sentence pass'd.
If you would have me use a Roman's right,
Show me the Romans I shall claim it of.
Call you these Romans? Why, your very slaves
Put on a prouder port, and cower not thus
Before you!

Opi. Hear you his seditious speech?
But he convicts himself. Say, Romans, say,
What penalty do you adjudge the traitor?

Tud. Let it be death.

Tit. Nay, good Tuditanus, name some other punishment.
We will consent to banish him.

Opi. It is too mild a sentence. Let it be death!

Senators. Ay, death!

Fla. Come down, Opimius, help us to collect
The votes.

[*OPIMIUS descends from the rostrum, and goes down behind the Citizens.*]

Vet. O, Romans! he that is content
To live among you, prostrate as you are,
Should suffer worse than death!

Opi. Your votes!

CAIUS GRACCHUS *appears in the rostrum.*

Caius. Opimius, hold!

[*Upon hearing CAIUS GRACCHUS the people shout, press round the rostrum, and cry, "Caius! Caius Gracchus! Caius! Caius!"*]

Opi. How! Gracchus in the rostrum!

Caius. Hold, good Opimius, do not yet collect
The votes.

Tit. & Citizens. No! no!—No votes!

Mar. Speak, Caius Gracchus! speak!

Caius. I come to plead for Vettius.

Tit. Go on! go on!

Caius. The brother of Tiberius for the friend!

Mar. Noble Caius, go on!

Caius. I pray you, gentle friends, if I should make you

A poor, confused, disjointed, graceless speech,
 Let it not hurt the man for whom I plead.
 If I should falter—if my heart should rise
 Into my throat, and choke my utterance,
 Or if my eyes should with a torrent drown
 My struggling words, let it not, I beseech you,
 Let it not hurt the man for whom I plead!

Mar. Tiberius lives again! Tiberius speaks!

Caius. Tiberius lives again! Alas, my friends!
 Go ask the Tiber if he lives again;
 Cry for him to its waters; they do know
 Where your Tiberius lies, never to live
 Again. Their channel was his only grave,
 Where, still, they murmur o'er him; but, with all
 The restless chafing of their many waves,
 Cannot awake one throb in the big heart
 That wont to beat so strong, when struggling for
 Your liberties!

Tit. Noble Tiberius!

Mar. Noble Caius! See how he weeps for his brother!

Opi. Their hearts are his already. Our labour's lost.

Caius. What is't you do? Is it to banishment
 Or death, you are about to doom that man?
 Know you no heavier punishment for those
 That love you? Rather let them live, to hear
 You groan beneath the burdens of the great,
 And bear it!—To behold you vilely spurn'd
 By clients, bondsmen, hirelings, and bear it!
 To see you griped by heartless usury!
 To hear your children cry to you for food,
 Without a shelter for your wretched heads,
 Or land enough to serve you for a grave,
 And bear it! To a Roman, such as Vettius,
 What banishment, what death, were suffering
 Equal to life like this?

Tit. Most true! most true!

Mar. Vettius is a friend to the people, and therefore he is
 accused.

First Citizen. Ay, that's his crime.

Second Citizen. He's innocent.

Tit. & Mar. Vettius is innocent!

Opi. Have you done, Caius?

For, by your leave, I will produce my witnesses.

Vet. They are the creatures of thy tampering;
 Wretches that feed upon the victims of
 Thy cruelty.

Opi. Hoo, there! My witnesses!

Mar. No witnesses! no witnesses!

Tit. Speak, Gracchus, speak!

We'll hear you, Gracchus, before a thousand witnesses.—
 Go on!

Citizens. Go on! go on!

Caius. Romans! I hold a copy of the charge,
 And depositions of the witnesses.
 Upon three several grounds he is arraign'd :
 First, that he strove to bring the magistracy
 Into contempt ; next, that he form'd a plot,
 With certain slaves, to raise a tumult ; last,—
 And were there here the slightest proof, myself
 Would bid him sheathe a dagger in his breast,—
 That he conspired with enemies of Rome—
 With foreigners, barbarians—to betray her !
 The first, I'll answer : Vettius is a Roman,
 And 'tis his privilege to speak his thoughts.
 The next, I'll answer : Vettius is a freeman,
 And never would make compact with a slave.
 The last, I'll answer : Vettius loves his country ;
 And who that loves his country would betray her ?
 But, say they, " We have witnesses against him."
 Name them ! Who stands the first upon the list ?
 A client ! I'll oppose to him a senator.
 Who next ? A slave ! Set down a Roman knight !
 Who follows last ? The servant of a questor !
 I'll place a tribune opposite to him !
 How stand we now ? Which weighs the heavier ?
 Their questor's servant, or my tribune ?—Their
 Slave, or my Roman knight ?—Their client, or
 My senator ? Now, call your witnesses.

Mar. We'll have no witnesses !

Tit. For your sake, Caius, we acquit him.

Mar. Vettius is innocent.

Citizens. Ay ! ay ! ay !

Mar. The tribes acquit Vettius by acclamation.

Citizens. We do ! we do !

Opi. Hear me, I say !

Citizens. No ! no ! no !

Caius. [*Descending from the rostrum.*] Their voices are against
 you, good Opimius !

Fla. To please the people, we withdraw our charge.

Citizens. Huzza ! huzza !

Caius. Come, Vettius, come ! my brother's friend is free !

Citizens. Huzza ! huzza !

[*CAIUS GRACCHUS, VETTIUS, and Citizens go out.*]

Fla. This was their policy !—What's to be done ?

Opi. Remove him from the city, and you nip
 The danger in the bud. I'll take him for
 My questor, if you'll name him to the office,
 And render good account of him. Who waits
 Until a reptile stings him, ere he crushes it ?
 Tread on it at once !

Fla. Your counsel pleases me.
 Here's the commission I designed for Carbo,
 All but the name, filled up. In Carbo's place,
 I'll insert Caius, and despatch it to him.

Op. I leave Rome ere an hour.

Fla. He shall have orders

Most positive to bear you company.

Op. Of your decision you shall reap the fruits,
Or, when you name your friends, leave out Opimius!

[*OPIMIUS and TUDITANUS go out, the scene closes on the rest.*

SCENE III.—CAIUS GRACCHUS's House.

Enter LIVIA and LICINIA.

Lici. I am the happiest wife in Rome, my Livia!
The happiest wife in Rome.

Livia. I doubt it not!

But there's Flaminius' wife, the other day,
Scarce from the Forum to her house could pass
For salutations, that her husband won
The consulate.

Lici. That day, my Caius sat
At home with me, and read to me, my Livia.
Little cared I who won the consulate!

Livia. And there's Lectorius has obtained a government;
His wife will be a queen!

Lici. Well, let her be so!
My queendom is, to be a simple wife.
This is my government, my husband's house,
Where, when he sits beside me, I'm enthroned.
Enough. You'll smile; but, Juno be my witness!
I'd rather see him, with his boy upon
His knee, than seated in the consul's chair,
With all the senate round him.

[*During this speech she pulls forward the table, &c.
and places her embroidery.*

Livia. Yet his greatness
Must needs be thine.

Lici. I do not care for greatness:
It is a thing lives too much out of doors;
'Tis anywhere but at home; you will not find it
Once in a week, in its own house, at supper
With the family. Knock any hour you choose,
And ask for it; nine times in ten they'll send you
To the senate, or the Forum, or to such
Or such a one's, in quest of it! 'Tis a month
Since Caius took a meal from home, and that
Was with my brother. If he walks, I walk
Along with him, if I choose; or if I stay
Behind, it is a race 'twixt him and the time
He promised to be back again, which is first;
And when he's back, and the door shut on him,
Consume happy in my world within,
I never think of any world without.

Livia. Well, then, you are the happiest wife in Rome.

Lici. Tell me, and did Flaminius' wife weep, Livia,
That day when Rome did salutation to her?

Livia. Weep!—No. Why should she weep?

Lici. For happiness.

Do you see? I cannot talk of Caius, but
I weep, so happy am I! Here's Cornelia;
That stately step is hers. She loves me, Livia,
Though oft she chides me, that I'd have my Caius
Live for his wife alone.

Enter CORNELIA.

Cor. Good day, my Livia.

Now would I lose my head, could I not tell
What this fair thing, that calls me mother, has
Been talking of: if not her husband, then
For once hath the hundredth chance turn'd up, with all
The ninety-nine against it!

Lici. Well, a wife
May talk of her husband.

Cor. Did I not tell you so?
Well, well! I've just now come from thy young Caius;
We've almost quarrell'd; would you think it? Mind,
Licinia, what I say. That boy's the making
Of a man that will not keep on humble terms
With Fortune, but walk up to her, and challenge her
To smile or frown her most.

Lici. It must content me,
His father is not such a one.

Cor. May be!

Lici. Ay, but I'm sure of it! [*Sits down to her embroidery.*]

Livia. Good day, Licinia!
Cornelia, health be with you!

Lici. Must you go?
You have not told me yet the morning's news.

Livia. Indeed I've heard none, save that Vettius,
They say, is to be banish'd, which no doubt
You know already.

Lici. Not a word of it.
What is the time of day?

Livia. 'Tis the third hour,
And past. Good day again.

[*Goes out.*]

Cor. Good day, my Livia!
Why, my Licinia, what's the matter with you?
You've suffered Livia to depart, without
Saying good-bye to her.

Lici. 'Tis past the time
Caius should have been back, almost an hour.

Cor. Well, what and if it is? Go on with your work,
And while the time away; the sooner he'll
Be with you.

[*Advancing towards her, and looking over her shoulder.*]

Why you've done that rose to the life.
 A musk-rose, is it not? 'Tis everything
 Except the scent, and that almost I think
 I can perceive with looking on't. Indeed,
 You are a skilful needle!

Lici. Do you think
 Caius hath aught to do with Vettius' trial?

Cor. Think what is passing on Olympus! One way
 Or the other, what concerns it us? Men have
 Their proper business, which no part it is
 Of ours to help to manage. Why, that thread's
 A crimson one you're taking to the leaf?

Lici. [*Rising.*] Cornelia! Mother! Know you anything
 About Caius? I'm sure you do. You praise
 My work when I discourse of him; when I question you
 Concerning him, your answer but puts off
 The proper one, which, were it good to have,
 Would you not give it me? I fear, I know
 Not what! Oh, tell me what have I to fear?
 Keep me not in the dark! A thing, we see not,
 Stirring will startle us, which, when light comes,
 We smile to find it nothing.

Cor. Take your seat,
 And I'll sit down by you; and listen to me.

Lici. I thank you now, Cornelia!

Cor. Thank me by-and-by;
 You should, but I doubt you will not. I know nothing
 Of Caius' measures.

Lici. Measures!—Hath he measures?

Cor. Hath he hands and feet?—Hath he brains and
 heart?—Is he
 A man?—What do you take him for?—Have men
 No parts to play but lovers?—What! are they
 Not citizens as well?—Have they not crafts,
 Callings, professions? Women act their parts,
 Then, when they make their order'd houses know them.
 Men must be busy out of doors,—must stir
 The city,—yea, make the great world aware
 That they are in it; for the mastery
 Of which they race, and wrestle, and such feats
 Perform, the very skies, in wonderment,
 Echoing Earth's acclaim, applaud them, too!

Enter LICINIUS.

What want you with me, my Licinius? [*Rising and taking him
 aside.*] You

Have come to tell me something. Caius hath spoken
 For Vettius? I was sure he would! 'Tis done!
 He has enter'd the lists—he has stripp'd for the course! I know
 He will not get fair play, no more than his brother.
 These fears are not good omens, my Licinius!
 But let him run it nobly!

Lic. Nobly he
Has started! Vettius is acquitted.

Cor. So far
So well. Away! Hurry him home to us,—
The sooner here the better!

Lici. [*Rising.*] Stay, Licinius!

Cor. I'll tell you all, Licinia; let him go.
Caius hath spoken in the Forum for [*LICINIUS goes out.*
His brother's friend, and they've acquitted him.

Lici. [*Bursting into tears.*] An hour ago I was the happiest wife
In Rome!

Cor. Licinia, if you are Caius' wife,
I am his mother. Is he not dear to me,—
My youngest son, and last? Yet do I bear
That which I know must come. I know my son:
Know thou thy husband—know our Caius Gracchus!
He loves his mother well—Licinia better,—
His country best! As I, his mother, grudge not
That he prefers thee, thou, his wife, repine not
That he prefers his country. Both of us
Make up our minds to whatsoever may follow.

Enter LUCIUS.

Luc. My master's coming, Cornelia, attended by a crowd
of citizens, who rend the air with shouts. They say he has
procured the acquittal of the noble Vettius. Rome is all joy
and exultation.

Cor. Run to the door, and wait upon thy master.

[*LUCIUS goes out.*
Hear you, Licinia? Away with these sad looks;
Damp not your husband's triumph! Can you hear
The people's shouts, and not partake their joy?

Lici. I can remember, when Tiberius fell,
Not one of all of them had voice enough
To bid his murderers hold!

Cor. 'Tis well, Licinia!
Had he not fallen in a most generous cause,
I should have thought of that as well as you! [*Shouts without.*

Enter CAIUS GRACCHUS, LUCIUS, and Attendants.

My son—my Caius! give you joy!—You've saved
The life of your brother's friend!

Caius. Licinia knows it?

Cor. She does; go to her.

Caius. She has more to learn.

Scarce had I left the Forum, when a message
From the consul follow'd, giving me the post
Of questor, and requiring me on the instant
To join Opimius. [*LUCIUS and Attendants go out.*

Cor. What! and must you leave us?
I did not look for this. At once, my Caius?
Well, son, I'm ready. Go, prepare thy wife.

Caius. What, my Licinia! don't you speak to Caius?

Lici. You never said a word of it to me!

Re-enter LICINIUS.

Lic. Come, Caius, are you ready?

Lici. Ready for what?

Caius. To take a ride, wife, and a long one, too.

Lic. The general waits.

Re-enter LUCIUS and Attendants, bearing CAIUS's helmet, sword, and cloak.

Lici. The general waits!—What general?
Where are you going, Caius?—Oh, ye gods!
What else do ye intend?—Tell me the worst!

Caius. Love, I'm appointed questor to Opimius;
And but a moment have for the farewells
'Twould take a day to speak! Do you trust your Caius?

Lici. Do I love thee!

Cor. Ay, Licinia, if you love him!
Wouldst have thy husband be the lowest man
In Rome? Thou knowest none may hope to gain
The honours of the state, who have not shown
Their prowess in the field. A Roman wife
Is married to her husband's glory, not
His ease and pleasure. Come, take leave of him.

Lici. I'll see you to your horse.

Cor. What, with that face?

Lici. Will you not see your boy before you go?

Caius. I saw him, Sweet, as I came in.

Lici. Well, Caius,
Farewell!

Caius. Now, that's my own Licinia!
I'll send you letters, love, day after day.
Now, that's my own brave girl, to smile! 'Tis like
A sunny morning to a traveller
At setting out, which fills him with fair omens.
Farewell!

Lici. I'll see you to the door.

Caius. So do.
Keep up your heart, love; I can come to you,
You know, at a day's warning!—Think of that.
Or you can come to me!—and you will write
Dear letters, won't you! every word of which
I'll kiss, and think I press the hand that traced them!
There now;—and, love, remember, as I shall,
Sad parting makes sweet meeting. Now, my Licinia!

[They go out.]

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Street in Rome.**Enter FANNIUS.*

Fan. The gods provide for him ! Fame talks of him,
 As of a theme she could emblazon the more
 The more she should dilate on't. Enemies
 Contend with friends which shall outdo the other
 In vaunting of him. Yea, the hands that hate him
 Supply him but with richest kindnesses ;
 The bane, they'd work him, turning into good.
 This questorship, for his undoing meant,
 Has built him up a thousand times the man
 He was before ; that scarce a day can pass,
 But something's added, to swell up the amount
 Of his o'erflowing fortunes.

Enter FLAMINIUS.

Fla. Health to Fannius !
 Opimius is arrived.

Fan. I am glad of it.

Fla. Something to temper joy,—would you believe it ?
 Gracchus is now in Rome, or soon to be.
 What think you ?

Fan. That, if he returns to Rome,
 Rome's at his feet.

Fla. Come to the senate. Something
 Must be resolved upon to hurt his credit,
 And slake the people's joy at seeing him.

Fan. Effect but that, thou art a god to Rome ! [*They go out.*]

SCENE II.—*Caius Gracchus' House.*

CORNELIA, LICINIA, and LICINIUS discovered—LICINIA
seated at a table.

Cor. Are not you pleased at this, Licinia !

Lici. No ;

Nor pleased, yet nor displeased, Cornelia.
 What care I that the world allows him good
 And wise ? Did I not know him so before ?
 Had I a doubt of it ?—Whom did I ask
 To give their oath of it ?—I was content
 With mine own knowledge. Why should I be glad
 That all applaud him ?—For his sake ?—Alas !
 For any cause but that ! Whom all applaud,
 Let the tide change, though never change the man,
 All are as sure to blame ! I did not wed

Thy son as one would choose an idle gem,
To sparkle, for the praise of others' eyes,
But that he blazed in mine.

Cor. Go on, Licinius.

Lic. His very fame more profit brings to Rome,
Than the exploits themselves of other men.
His fair renown has charmed Micipsa so,
That he has sent large store of corn to the army;
And his ambassadors have made it known
To the senate, in full assembly, that their master
Perform'd this from his mere respect for Caius.

Cor. Oh, glorious boy! surpass thy mother's hopes!
What said the senate?—Were they not struck with this?
Did they not own the virtue of my son,
And praise the name of Gracchus?

Lic. They!—Alas!

Their proud blood bows to aught but virtue. No;
The ambassadors were spurn'd,—driven out with shame,—
Sent back with scorn, as mere barbarians, who,
By showing their just preference of your son,
Slighted the senate of its due respect.

Lici. Unhappy Caius! thy conspicuous virtue
But marks thee out the victim of the senate!

Cor. It marks him out the favourite of the gods!
Think'st thou I rear'd my son to follow virtue
Only for men's acclaim? It ill had fitted
The child of Scipio, and had never made me
The mother of the Gracchi! [*Aside to LICINIUS.*] Say, Licinius,
Knows Caius this?

Lic. [*Aside to CORNELIA.*] He does, from many hands. .
His friends are strong. The senate cannot hide
His worth from Rome. The people think of Caius
As their sole hope; and should he stand for tribune,
He must obtain the office.

Cor. What! and will
He stand for tribune? Wherefore do I ask?
Do I not know he will? [*Shouts without.*]

Lici. What means that shout?

Lic. Forgive me, sister, that I have conceal'd
The measures of his friends, who have advised him
To show himself at once in Rome. No doubt
'Tis Caius, and the people welcome him.

Lici. 'Tis Caius!—Hear I right?—'Tis he—My Caius!

Enter CAIUS GRACCHUS and POMPONIUS.

Caius. My soul, we meet again!—My honour'd mother!

Cor. The mother is honour'd in her son, my Caius.

Caius. Licinius—friend and brother! I received
Your letters, and I thank you for your care.
Licinia, thank the gods! we meet again.
How is our boy, love?—How art thou thyself?
Let me look at thee. Well, as my heart could wish!

Great Jove! to gaze on such a precious thing,
And know it mine! You may smile, Marcus, but
There's such a thing as loving one's wife. Licinia,
Am I not with thee again? Let him who thinks
The world is worth his home, exchange home for it:
A little time; he'll find he has lost a world,
Not found one!

Enter LUCIUS.

Luc. Caius, a messenger
From the senate.

Caius. Admit him.

[*LUCIUS goes out.*]

Mother, you'll give me leave. Licinia,
I've many things to tell thee. Count these gems, love;
They were a gift to me for thee, from hands
That only know thee from thy husband's tongue,
Which ne'er could speak the moiety of thy worth!
Go with my mother, Sweet! I have neglected
Some matters of high duty, just to snatch
This look at thee; and those must now be done.

Lici. You'll not be long; be with us soon!

Caius. No, Sweet!

Lici. Remember, now! [*CORNELIA and LICINIA go out.*]

Enter a Lictor.

Lictor. The senate, Caius, cites you to appear
Before the censors.

Caius. Well!—Acquaint the senate
I shall obey.

[*Lictor goes out.*]

Pom. 'Twas rumour'd, ere you came,
Opimius had return'd; on which account
The senate had been suddenly convoked.

Caius. I look'd for this! Let me think—Let me think!—
Why, yes.

Nothing done rashly, nor yet timidly,
The mean's discretion, back'd by calm resolve.
I cannot do it!—My blood's a point too warm!
To hear a man deal out morality,
Axiom upon axiom—for an hour dilate
Upon the value of an aphorism,—
Amplify to o'errunning in the cause,
And then, at every allegation,
Invoke no less a witness than high Jove;
And know him all the while to play the knave.
Great Hercules! it sets my veins a-boiling!

Lic. Caius, you would need a rein
More firmly ruled than this.

Caius. I know it—I know it,
As well as you. Hang them! I'll try and play
The cautious man for once. 'Tis time to choose
New tribunes, is it not?

Pom. It is.

Caius. You see
 I'm not at home an hour, and they let loose
 The dogs upon me! Come!—to the Campus Martius!
 Now will you see them hold their hands to the gods!
 That saw my brother's blood upon those hands!
 They thought I had forgot that brother's death!
 Why, where's the Tiber?—Is it not at Rome?
 What!—Has it sunk!—run out!—Flows it not still,
 Its yellow hue turn'd purple, ever since!
 Its waters, blood; which all the floods of heaven
 Can't change again to water!—Blood! that cries
 For vengeance at a living brother's hand!
Lic. How do you mean to act? Your plans, my Caius?
Caius. My plans! Come with me to the Campus Martius!
 [They go out.]

SCENE III.—*The Campus Martius—the Portico of the Temple of Mars, under which the chairs for the Censors are placed.*

Enter TITUS and MARCUS.

Tit. So, Caius is returned from the army?
Mar. Ay; and there's not an honest man in Rome but's glad of it.
Tit. Why gather the people to the Campus Martius?
Mar. Here come two senators' gentlemen. They will inform you.

Enter SEXTUS and QUINTUS.

Tit. Health to you, master!
Sex. Health to you, master!
Tit. Can you tell us why the people gather this way?
Sex. For the old reason, friend: we are all good till we're tried.
Tit. Ay, indeed! What honest man has turned rogue to-day?
Sex. Many a one, I doubt; but chiefly he whom our good citizens believe the honestest in Rome.
Mar. Mean you your master, friend?
Sex. No; I mean the master of the people; the gentleman who feels for their empty stomachs, and gives them words to eat; your Caius Gracchus, who calls our tradesmen the nobility of Rome; and so indeed they are, if rags can make them so.
Mar. No bad evidence! You cannot wear the wool without shearing the sheep. But, pray, what's the matter with Caius Gracchus?
Sex. Only that he has returned from the army without his general's leave,—nothing more, except a whisper or two about the tumult at Fregella. 'Tis said he had a hand in it.
Mar. What's your opinion?
Sex. Believe me, it does not favour him.
Tit. What! you like the fare that the patricians give?
Sex. What fare?

Tit. A good dinner. Caius, you say, feeds the people upon words. A very natural preference! There's not a dog or an ass in Rome that would not be of your mind.

Sex. [*Raising his staff.*] Pray which of the two may you be, friend?

Mar. Why ask you?

Sex. Oh! merely that, upon occasion, I may know whether I ought to take my foot or my staff to you. No offence, I hope. I have all the respect in the world for you, believe me.

Tit. [*To MARCUS.*] You have the worst of it. Let me take him in hand. [*To SEXTUS.*] Hark you, master; a word with you.

Sex. Your pleasure, master?

Tit. How comes your cloak to have that gloss upon it?

Sex. Not by partaking of your grease, friend.

Tit. My grease! Why, man, there's as much fat in a tanned hide as in all my body! The patricians have sweated me to very leanness, and left me nothing to recruit withal, but hunger and nakedness.

Sex. They are right. They find that their cattle grow restive with abundance of provender.

Tit. But they feed their curs, friend.

Sex. Whom do you call a cur?

Tit. Down with your staff, master, for I have another that may ruffle the gloss of your cloak for you. What! has anything surprised you? Do you wonder that the order which wins your battles in the field, should refuse your blows in the city? You despise us when you have no need of us; but if an ounce of power or peculation is to be gained through our means, oh! then you put on your sweet looks, and, howing to the very belts of our greasy jackets, you exclaim, "Fair gentlemen!—kind fellow-citizens!—loving comrades!—sweet, worthy, gentle Romans!—grant us your voices!" Or, if the enemy is to be opposed, oh! then we are "men of mettle!"—(poor starved devils!)—"the defenders of our country!"—(that is, your cattle as you call us)—and so indeed we are. We bear your patricians on our backs to victory; we carry them proudly through the ranks of the barbarians! They come off safe—we get the knocks, the pricks, and the scratches. They obtain crowns and triumphs,—we cannot obtain—a dinner! They get their actions recorded—we get ours forgotten! They receive new names and titles—we return to our old ones with which you honour us—"the rabble!—the herd!—the cattle!—the vermin!—the scum of Rome!"

Sex. Pray, friend, will you look at this staff of mine?

Tit. I look at it, friend.

Sex. Is it not a staff, friend?

Tit. Yes, if a staff is a staff, friend.

Sex. If I am weary, it enables me to rest myself; if I am lame, it helps me to walk; if I quarrel, it knocks down my adversary; and yet, is it not always a staff, friend?

Mar. [*To TITUS.*] You have the worst of it now. Let me

attack him. Hark you, master. Does your staff ever knock its owner on the pate?

Sex. What do you mean?

Mar. [*Striking him.*] Why thus.

Sex. Do you want to quarrel?

Mar. Oh! by no means. I only wanted to show you the difference between a staff and a man, friend.

Tit. Turn on him again. I'll second you, and here is a troop of friends at hand.

Qui. Bear with him no longer. Hither comes a band of our comrades. I'll beckon them to make haste. [*Calling off.*] Come on, come on! These greasy citizens are uttering treason against our masters, the noble patricians.

Enter Servants.

Mar. Hem!—Shall we go over the argument again, master? Is there anything else your staff can do?

Sex. Yes; when I carry it heedlessly, it sometimes chances to—trip me. [*Trips MARCUS.*]

Tit. Help, help, there!

[*Enter Citizens.*—*Confused cry of* "Down with the Citizens!" "Down with the Slaves and Servants!" *They are about to attack each other, when FLAMINIUS'S voice without stops them.*]

Enter FLAMINIUS, TUDITANUS, OPIMIUS, Senators, two Censors, and twelve Lictors.

Fla. Hold! hold! I charge you, you rash citizens! What means this tumult? How! is peace so old That you are weary of it? Who began This fray?

Sex. That caitiff yonder.

Tit. Our old names!

Mar. 'Twas that patrician's hireling that began it.

CAIUS GRACCHUS, and his Friends POMPONIUS and LICINIUS, appear behind.

Opi. Silence! ye wrangling discontented men! Ye pest of Rome! What stirs you to this brawl? I know your cue!—Your Gracchus has return'd, And ye give signal straight of discontent, Conspiracy, and foul rebellion! A noble leader for your noble party! A glorious soldier, that returns to Rome Without his general's leave! A worthy son Of Rome, that tampers with her enemies, And instigates her allies to revolt! An honest patriot——

[*Seeing CAIUS GRACCHUS close to him, he checks himself.*]

Caius. Proceed, Opimius!

Now is your proper time to speak. I am here—

Gracchus is here! Gracchus, that draws not on
A foe behind his back!

[OPIMIUS is confused—he walks sullenly to the place
appointed for him as the accuser of CAIUS GRACCHUS
—GRACCHUS fixes his eyes steadfastly upon OPIMIUS,
who betrays considerable embarrassment.

Opi. [Recovering.] This lofty bearing
Befits the man who quits his post, without
His general's leave; and used the sacred power
His office gave him, to pervert the faith
His duty 'twas to guard; as, amply, can
Fregella testify!

Caius. Is this your charge?
Censors! I'll save your labour. It appears
I am cited here, because I have return'd
Without my general's leave, and for the crime
Of having raised the tumult at Fregella.
First, with the first. I have remain'd my time;
Nay, I have overserved it by the laws—
The laws which Caius Gracchus dares not break.
But, censors, let that pass. I shall propose
A better question for your satisfaction:
"How have I served my time?" I'll answer that.
"How have I served my time?"—"For mine own gain,
Or that of the republic?" What was my office?
Questor. What was its nature? Lucrative;
So lucrative, that all my predecessors,
Who went forth poor, return'd home rich—so rich
Their very wine-vessels resign'd their store
Of fluid wealth, only for wealthier freight
Of solid gold. I went forth, poor enough;
But have return'd still poorer than I went.
Then, for my conduct as a soldier,
I do not blush to say, I have prevail'd
By mercy more than rapine. I have won
From enemies their hearts, before their arms;
And held the tributary states to Rome,
By friendship more than fear. I have answer'd that.

First Censor. If you have served your time, and faithfully
Discharged your duty, as a Roman questor,
So far you are acquitted.

Opi. To the next, then—
The tumult at Fregella.

Caius. Ay, to that!
Produce your proofs!

Opi. I charge you, as your general.

Caius. Your proofs—your evidence—your witnesses.

Opi. Is it from thee I hear this haughty challenge?
Who best should know thy actions? Wast thou not
Mine officer? I charge thee with the treason.
Before the gods, I charge thee with it, Caius;
I say, I charge thee as thy general.

Enter Voters.

Save you, masters; are you going to vote for the right candidate?

First Voter. Do you think we'd vote for the wrong one?

Tit. Then you'll vote for Caius Gracchus?

First Voter. No; I don't like him. They say he'll bring the state into danger. We are men that love peace and concord.

Tit. Ay, and good feeding. Hark you, master; take these cattle to the stalls of the patricians. The patricians make profitable masters. They give stripes only now and then; but that's nothing, you know, to a kindly beast. Away, I say!—to the stalls with them! [*They go out severally.*]

Enter LICINIA and CORNELIA.

Cor. Caius, you see, is nowhere to be found. Let us go home again.

Lici. Not till I see him.

Livia was right; he'll surely stand for tribune. Let's seek him in the Forum.

Cor. Are you mad?

Go to the Forum after him! All Rome
Would talk of it. When did you know a wife
Follow her husband to the Forum? Why,
"Would set all fingers pointing! Men would say,
"Caius did well to take a wife to school him;"
And every woman would cry "shame" upon him.
I'd rather lose a husband, than have people
So talk of mine.

Lici. You wish him to be tribune?

Cor. Licinia, no; I wish it not, my daughter;
But still I know, that if he will be tribune,
He will; and, knowing that, the unwelcome thought
That needs must be my guest I treat with grace,
For mine own dignity, and his contentment,
Which should not, profitless, be marr'd. [*Shouts without.*]
My child,

Why do you grasp me by the arm, and tremble?
The people shout for joy.

Lici. It is a kind
Of joy that's fearful to my mind. The breeze
That kindly bears the gladsome bark along,
Has oft been known to grow the hurricane
That sends her to the bottom!

Cor. Take her, Livia.

Go, both of you, look down the other street,
While I watch here. 'Chance you may light on Caius.

[*LICINIA and LIVIA go out.*]

'Tis Marcus, and with news! She's best away!

Mar. [*Entering.*] Cornelia!—

Cor. Quick!—Your news! What has he done?

Mar. Proposed himself for tribune!

Cor. Full well I knew that it would come to this!
 And I could tell what further it will come to,
 If I would. No matter. Two such sons as mine
 Were never made for mothers that have eyes
 Afraid of tears. Why did I rear my boys
 Companions for the gods, if not for this?
 Many a time, when they stood before me,
 Such things as mothers seldom look upon,
 And I have seem'd to feed on them with mine eyes;
 My thoughts have ponder'd o'er the bier, where they
 Lay stiff and cold! I would not see them so
 If I could help it; but I would not help it
 To see them otherwise, and other men.
 My Caius must be tribune!

[*Shouts several times, approaching nearer.*]

Lic. [*Entering.*] Caius is tribune!
 Those shouts proclaim it. [*Looking off.*] See, Cornelia,
 He comes! Behold!—Look how they hem him round!
 Why do you turn away?

Cor. I turn away
 To see that flush of triumph on his cheek
 Which lights it as he felt himself a god;
 And think how I may, after, see that cheek,
 And think upon that flush! Licinia's well
 Away; it had o'ercome her quite. Come, Licinius.

[*CORNELIA and LICINIUS retire.*]

*Enter CAIUS GRACCHUS, DRUSUS, POMPONIUS, TITUS,
 MARCUS, and Citizens, shouting.*

Caius. No more, my friends!—no more of this, I pray
 you!
 Disperse to your several homes. Why do you give
 These honours to your servant?

Tit. Suffer us
 To see you to your house.

Mar. Yes, Caius, yes,
 We'll hail your honour'd mother and your wife.

Pom. Indulge the people, Gracchus.

Caius. Well, my friends,
 If you will go with me—[*Seeing CORNELIA.*] My honour'd
 mother!

Cor. May the great gods, who crown'd thee with this
 triumph,
 Instruct thee so to use it as to bless
 Thy country! With a firm and mighty hand,
 Mayst thou uphold the laws, and keep them ever
 Above the proud man's violence, and within
 The poor man's reach; so shall thy mother—Rome—
 Acknowledge thee her son, and teach thy name
 To the applauding tongues of after-ages!
 Who is your brother tribune?

Caius. Worthy Drusus.

Cor. [*To DRUSUS.*] My son is happy in his colleague, sir,
And let me trust, will not dishonour him.

Dru. My honour is to second him, Cornelia.

Caius. Come, mother.

[*Going.*]

Re-enter LICINIA and LIVIA, meeting them.

Lic. Ha! Licinia!

Cor. [*Going up to her.*] My Licinia!
For Caius' honour act like Caius' wife:
He's tribune.

Lici. Tribune!

Cor. Think what eyes are on you!
You are the mother of a Roman, too!
Summon your spirits! That's my daughter! Come
Up to him now at once, and wish him joy,—
'Tis but an effort, and the words are out!

Lici. [*Crossing to CAIUS.*] Caius,—

Caius. Licinia!

Lici. Caius! I do give you joy!

[*She faints on his arm, and the curtain drops.*]

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Street in Rome.*

Enter FLAMINIUS and OPIMIUS.

Opi. Mark'd you, Flaminius, how they look'd at us?
That was defiance. I could read the name
Of Gracchus on those daring brows of theirs.
Behoves us now a meek look, where, before,
We gave a scowl. The people are our masters.
That Rome should ever see it!

Fla. We must bear it.

Opi. Ay, while our blood boils! We must smile, Flaminius,
And, at the same time, grind our teeth, if so
It pleases Gracchus. Gods! that a man I could take
By the throat and smite—yea, set my foot upon
For perfect loathing,—whom I should think it righteous
To slay in a temple—ay, by Hercules!
At the altar of a temple,—that a man
Like that should order me, and do it too
By vilest instruments! It is a task
For patience!

Fla. Never king was absolute
In Rome as he; his will is law. Popilius
Can witness that, self-banish'd to escape

A heavier doom. The senate has he lopp'd
Of half its power, with his three hundred knights
Whom he has named assistants to it, with
Equality of voices. Then, the state
Our modest tribune keeps! He never moves
But in a crowd of knights, ambassadors,
Soldiers, and magistrates, artificers,
And men of letters, that attend upon him.
There's not a man in Rome but Caius Gracchus.

Opi. Nay, there's another, my Flaminius;
His colleague, Livius Drusus. Don't you know him?

Fla. I do. A quiet, simple, honest man,
Who follows Gracchus with a modest zeal,
And rather seems, from an unaiming spirit,
To second his designs, than help them on
From principle.

Opi. You have described him well,
As he appears; I know him as he is.
'Tis opportunity that proves a man;
And, trust me, Livius Drusus is not one,
That, having power, lacks will, to overtop
His fellow. I shall use this Livius Drusus,
To combat Gracchus, with the very means
That make him to be fear'd. Have patience, and
You'll see my policy. They're coming to
The Forum—Drusus last! This shows me my
Exordium.

*Enter CAIUS GRACCHUS, preceded by a Lictor, LICINIUS, POM-
PONIUS, FLACCUS, FULVIUS, TITUS, MARCUS, twelve Citizens,
and DRUSUS last.*

Caius. Health to Flaminius!

Fla. Health to Gracchus!

Opi. What business is to-day before the commons?

Caius. Some colonies we think to send from Rome,
To the late conquer'd cities. Does Opimius
Approve the measure?

Opi. Gracchus asks the question,
As though he thought Opimius did not love
The people's good. 'Twere happy for the people,
If those, who flatter them, loved it as well.

Caius. Whom does Opimius call the people's flatterer?

Opi. Him who would feed the people's vanity,
By making them aspire above themselves.

Caius. Opimius, then, is not the people's flatterer.
How does he rate them? As we rate our herds.
How would he use them? As we use our herds.
Oh! may the people ever have such flatterers
As guard them from the kindness of such friends!

[CAIUS GRACCHUS and his party go out—DRUSUS is
following him, when OPIMIUS, with affected surprise,
stops him.

Opi. Why, Livius Drusus, is it you? I thought You were not come abroad to-day. No wonder: You're not the man, methinks, it suits to close The train that waits upon your colleague there. Ah, Drusus! if the Romans knew their friends, They would not follow Gracchus thus, and leave His betters at their heels!

Dru. I do not court Their favour, good Opimius. It contents me To know that I discharge, with honesty, The duty of their tribune.

Opi. Livius Drusus, There's not a man in Rome but, if he speaks The truth, will say, you do. I say it for one. So does Flaminius. Were you not hurried now, There's something, Drusus, I would say to show you What men think of you; but, as 'tis, I'll keep it Till you have time. Yet this, before you go, I would I were a bosom-friend of yours, To do you a friend's office. Give me your hand! I like you, Drusus, you're an honest tribune! I say, I like you; and if I did not say it Behind your back, I would not to your face. Farewell! Perhaps you're not so call'd for, neither, But you could spare a moment?

Dru. If it be Your pleasure—

Opi. Thank you, Drusus, thank you! This Is very kind of you. You know Flaminius?

Dru. I know his fair report.

Opi. You know himself, then; But know him better. Take him by the hand.

[FLAMINIUS crosses to DRUSUS, and takes his hand. He wants to know you better than by report.

Dru. I would I knew how to deserve this honour.

Opi. I would you knew what honour you deserve! Drusus, it is their loss, and yet their grace, That men of true worth seldom know themselves,— Whence mere pretension gets the upper hand,— And such the mass account as common men, As the unskill'd will oft take unwrought gold For brass. Drusus, it makes me mad To see the sterling'st ore thrown by, and what Is basest, hoarded only for the stamp Which the other only wants! I wish I had The coining of you, Drusus!

Dru. You would find You overweigh'd me.

Opi. Not a grain, by Jupiter! Or never weigh'd I yet an honest man. And here's to try it. Would you, Drusus, dare To achieve a thing you could and ought?

Dru. I were not
A man else.

Opi. Every one that knows you, Drusus,
Knows that you are a man, but are you *such*
A man?

Dru. I think I am.

Opi. I think so, too.

But, ever, what we most desire to be
We fear may not be, though we know not why
We fear it.—Drusus, I'll deal frankly with you ;
I will not hesitate, nor wind about,
Nor speak by halves, as if I fear'd to let
My thoughts go from me. Listen to me, then.
Rome is in danger—discord reigns in her ;
Her orders are opposed among themselves,
The people hate the senate, call us proud,
Cruel, luxurious, avaricious ; masters,
Oppressors, tyrants—men, alas ! my Drusus,
That are not masters even of their own !
The cause of this is Caius Gracchus. He,
For his own aims, lets no occasion pass
To inflame the commons ; wherefore, he revives
Old grievances, or fancies present, or
Predicts to come ; and should his course hold on
Without obstruction, Rome will rue the end !
The senate, Drusus, justly fearing this,
Have much debated on the remedy :
And all at length agree there is but one,
Namely, to find a man that's fit to mediate
Between them and the people. Drusus, thou
Art he !

Dru. Alas ! what weight have I, Opimius,
To bear against the weight of Caius Gracchus ?

Opi. What weight hast thou ! Thou good and honest man !
Now, by the gods, I love thee, Drusus, for
Thy true simplicity ! What weight hast thou !
Why, hast thou not the weight of Caius Gracchus ?
You share one office—the same cares divide,
The same responsibilities ; why not
The same respect ? Oh, Livius Drusus ! Caius
Were not content did Drusus lead the people,
And Gracchus humbly follow at their heels !
But let that pass. Deal frankly with a friend.
What think you, Drusus ? Do the senate hate
The people ?

Dru. Nay, I would believe they did not.

Opi. I know you would ; I think you *do* ; but much
I wonder that you do. 'Tis not the fashion.
I love you, Drusus !—Drusus, do you think
I shuffle with you ?—Do not answer me !
I am sure you do not. Take my word then, Drusus :
The senate love the people. Ay, I know

'Tis easily said, but I will prove it to you.
 Know, then, I have been deputed to solicit
 Your friendship for the senate—not to oppose,
 As once Octavius did the former Gracchus,
 But to outdo your colleague in his plans
 In favour of the people, still proposing
 Some law for their additional advantage ;
 And only stating—as in simple fairness
 You should—that so the senate had express'd
 Their wishes—nothing farther. By this means,
 The people will be served ; the senate placed
 Again in confidence ; your rival stripp'd
 Of dangerous influence ; yourself exalted,
 According to your worth ; and, to sum up
 The whole at once, your country saved from ruin.

Fla. You cannot hesitate in such a cause ?

Dru. I undertake the trust with sacred zeal ;
 And, if I can compose the present evils,
 Shall deem myself most happy.

Opi. I am sure of it,
 And shall with joy report this to the senate.
 Meanwhile, be often with us. Let us know
 Your wishes for the people ; we'll promote them.
 What you say *should* be, *shall* be, on your saying,
 Or break at once with us. The tribes shall know
 What 'tis to have a tribune of repute,
 Who does not use his office to promote
 Cabal, and strife, and jealousy, and hate,
 Like certain gentlemen.

To your work at once !

But, hark you, Livius Drusus ; tell me truly,
 Are you not over modest ? Come ! confess, now.
 I know you are—I know, that, should the senate
 Give you your choice of honours, you'd refuse
 To challenge e'en the smallest ! Well, no matter !
 Such men live for their country. Heed not Gracchus,
 If he upbraid you—If ? Should the plebeians
 Give but one shout for Drusus, he'll be sick
 With all the gall of envy ! Come to the senate
 To-morrow. Be not strange with us, good Livius !
 Mark him now ! Heed him well, for he is wily,
 And thou art simple in thine honesty.
 You'll come to the senate, to-morrow ? Eye him, Drusus ;
 He's a rank traitor ! Mind to-morrow, now.
 So, farewell, honest Drusus !

[*DRUSUS goes out.*]

Fla. Nobly play'd !

Opi. Beyond my hopes. Let us inform our friends ;
 And as the choice of tribunes is at hand,
 Prevent his re-election. [*Shouts.*] That's for Gracchus !
 Ay, shout away ! Unmoved, we'll hear you soon :
 The trap is ready : Let the lion roar !

[*They go out.*]

SCENE II.—*The Forum.*

CAIUS GRACCHUS *discovered in the Rostrum*—TITUS, MARCUS,
and Citizens—the people shout.

Caius. No more, my friends! How often must I tell you,
You should not pay these honours to your tribune?

Tit. Long may you live, Caius!

Mar. Prosperously and long!

Hither comes honest Drusus. Shall we shout for him?

Tit. Why should we? Think you, he is any great friend
to the people? Not he! Is he not a quiet, easy, contented
man, who lets things take their course? Can such a man be
a friend to the people? No, no; he is no friend to the people.
He is well enough in his place, because he keeps a rogue out
of it; and just says ay, and no, according to the will of Caius.

Mar. You say right. For my part, I never liked your
peaceful, honest man. Give me a stirring fellow, that will
browbeat the nobles, and call the authorities to account.
That's your only tribune.

Enter DRUSUS.

Caius. Drusus, I have waited for you! I am glad you have
come.

Mar. [*Apart to TITUS.*] Observe, he hasn't hurried himself.
[*To the Citizens.*] Make way for Drusus!—[*DRUSUS ascends
the rostrum.*] Make way there—Let the good man pass! You
may know by his gait that he loves high feeding, and sleeps
one-half of the day, for having dozed away the other half.

Tit. Silence! Caius is going to speak. Cheer him, masters!

All. Huzza! Long live Caius!

Caius. Here, Romans, are some drafts of new decrees
We mean to offer for your approbation.

I know not whether you will think them wise;
But this I know, the hand that drew them up,
Belongs to one, who would die to do you good.

Tit. Worthy Caius!

All. Long may you live, Caius!

Caius. With grief we see you bare of many goods,
That make life sweet. Your wretchedness afflicts
The heart of Caius. Thousands of brave men,
Wandering about the streets of Rome, without
Means, or employment to procure them! Now,
We here direct two colonies to be sent
To the late conquer'd cities.

Tit. Noble Caius!

Mar. Worthy Caius!

All. [*Shouting.*] Caius for ever!

Dru. My countrymen—

Mar. Drusus is going to speak. Now for an oration!

Dru. You need not learn I lack those noble parts,
Which make the orator you love to hear.

I have no merit but my honesty;
And 'tis my honesty that says to you,
I'd die with Caius for the good of Rome!

Tit. Yes, yes; Drusus is an honest, quiet, good sort of man. That everybody must say for him; but as for his speech, I'd make as good a one myself. Cheer him, masters—cheer him! [*The people cheer faintly.*]

Dru. I do not ask you to applaud me, Romans;
I love your welfare better than your praise.

Mar. Come, come, that's very well, now; cheer for that, masters;—very well, indeed, for Drusus! Cheer! cheer!

[*They cheer louder.*]
Dru. I thank you, fellow-citizens. Don't mind me.

Mar. Cheer him again, masters! [*A general cheer.*]

Dru. Romans, I know my colleague's love for you;

And yet, methinks, he stints it in this measure.

Two colonies! What are two colonies?

Two handfuls! He should stretch this grant, and ease

The groaning and debilitated state!

Two handfuls of the people, to two cities!

Caius for once adopts half-measures. I

Propose, that to each city there be sent

Three thousand of the poorest citizens—

Three thousand to each city.

Mar. Worthy Drusus! noble Drusus! Huzza!

All. Huzza!

Dru. Countrymen,
Pay me no thanks! Indeed you owe me none;
I only speak the wishes of the senate.

Mar. The senate! May we cheer for the senate?

Tit. To be sure, if they do the people good!

Mar. Huzza for the senate, masters! huzza!

All. Huzza!

Caius. Indeed! The senate! For the people's sake,

We, also, thank the senate. Worthy Romans,

Now our affairs put on a prosperous face,

The senate send you favours. We thank the senate!

But not this mighty kindness of the senate

Can set my cares at rest. I have made an estimate

Of certain waste uncultivated lands,

South of the Tiber. These—however, subject

To certain trifling services and rents—

We here allot to fifteen hundred families

From the plebeians of the lowest class.

Tit. Noble Caius! worthy Caius! Cheer, masters!

Mar. Stop! Drusus is going to speak. Hear what Drusus says.

Dru. Romans, my worthy colleague, whom I honour,
Seems not to love that you should owe the senate
Favour or justice.

Caius. Drusus!

Mar. Go on, Drusus! let him go on! Come, come, Drusus
must have fair play.

All. Drusus! Drusus!

Dru. If 'tis your pleasure, friends, to hear my colleague
Rather than me, you only have to say it.

All. No! no! no! Go on! go on!

Dru. I care not who befriends you, worthy citizens;
The senate or the tribunes. The more friends
You have, the less you will have need of me.

Mar. Good, honest man, go on!

All. Go on! go on!

Dru. I say—and if I know the thing I say,
Am I not right in saying it?—I say,
The senate wish the people to be happy,
And do not want to tax them. Noble Caius
Might have gone farther in this act of his,
And not displeas'd the senate; therefore, I,
Without regard to his decree, enact,
That certain waste, uncultivated lands,
Lying north of Rome, be straight parcell'd out
To fifteen hundred of the poorest families,
Free of all rent and service.

Mar. A noble decree, noble Drusus! The worthy senate!
Huzza for Drusus and the senate!

Dru. My friends, think not of Drusus! Thank the senate.

Mar. Good, honest man! He is too modest to take the
praise to himself; he gives it all to the senate. Observe Caius;
he changes colour; he envies Drusus; he doesn't like the ap-
plause we give to Drusus. Applaud the good man again.
Long live Drusus! Drusus and the senate for ever! Huzza!

All. Huzza!

Caius. May I be heard, my friends?

Tit. Speak, Gracchus, speak!

Mar. Drusus for ever!

Caius. Rome—Rome, my friends, for ever!
Whoe'er is good—whoe'er is just and great—
The honour be to Rome, our common mother!
I have warn'd you oft! Look to your liberties,—
Beware the senate's arts! beware her tools!

Dru. How! Caius—

Caius. Nay, good Livius Drusus!

Mar. Not a word against Drusus!

All. No! no! no!

Mar. The senate has acted well in this.

All. It has! it has!

Caius. I am content—If you approve it, masters,
I am content. I cannot help my fears;
But let it pass. I'll say, I am content!
Masters, I never yet incurr'd your censure:
If I am over-watchful for your safety,
Guarding you 'gainst the chance of treachery,—
If I suspect—But, since it pleases you,
I'll not suspect this kindness of the senate!
And yet it may be ask'd—when you were weak,

And needed friends, where was the senate's kindness ?
 Then you might help yourselves ; now you are strong,
 It stretches forth its hands to give you aid !
 I think, 'twas not the kindness of the senate
 That gave me counsel, when my first decree
 Declared the magistrate to be infamous,
 Who was deposed by judgment of the people.
 Or, when my next enacted, that the magistrate,
 Who banish'd, without law, a citizen,
 Should answer the assembly of the people.
 Or, when, to give you plenitude of power,
 I granted each inhabitant of Latium
 The right of suffrage !

Tit. Hear him ! hear him !

Mar. Silence ! Drusus is going to speak.

Dru. Romans, I'll not pretend to say how much
 You owe the senate ; be it much, or little,
 Or nothing. Only, while they wish to serve you,
 I'll not speak ill of them. They have desired me
 To show you favour. Mark me—have desired me !
 Should I be jealous of them ? Words, my friends,
 Are air ; but actions are substantial things,
 That warrant judgment. But we'll not debate
 Their truth or falsehood. They appear to favour us,
 And let us take advantage of their seeming !
 My colleague, Caius, as he just now said,
 Has given to the inhabitants of Latium
 The right to vote—the right of citizens.
 Has not this act, then, made them citizens ?
 And yet, my friends, the Latin soldier feels
 The scourge—He feels the scourge !—an infamy,
 That never should approach the freeman's back !
 We now decree, that it shall be unlawful,
 Henceforth for any captain of our legions
 To beat with rods a soldier of that nation.

Mar. A noble decree !—Worthy Drusus !—A noble decree !
 Huzza !

Dru. My friends, I now depart ; but, ere I leave you,
 Let me declare, that whatsoe'er I have done,
 I have done with the approval of the senate.

[*Descends from the rostrum.*]

Mar. We'll follow you home, Drusus ! [*GRACCHUS hurries down the steps.*] We'll follow you home ! We'll cheer the senators as we pass them ; we'll follow you home !

Dru. Nay, my good friends !

Mar. Come, come ; let us follow him to his house.

Dru. Well ; since you will not be denied—

[*Going.*]

Caius. Stay, Livius Drusus ! Let me speak with you.

Dru. Your pleasure, Caius ?

Caius. Pleasure ! Livius Drusus,
 Look not so sweet upon me. I am no child
 Not to know bitter, for that it is smear'd

With honey! Let me rather see thee scowl
 A little. When thou speak'st, remind me rather
 Of the rough trumpet, more than the dulcet lute.
 By Jove! I can applaud the honest caitiff
 That shows his craft.

Dru. The caitiff!

Caius. Ah!—Ho!—Now

You are Livius Drusus—that was just before
 The man we took you for—the easy man,
 That, so the world went right, cared not who got
 The praise; but rather from preferment shrunk,
 Than courted it. Who ever thought, in such
 A plain and homely piece of stuff, to see
 The crafty senate's tool?

Dru. The senate's tool!

Caius. Now, what a deal of pains for little profit!
 If you could play the juggler with me, Livius—
 To such perfection practise seeming as
 To pass it on me for reality—
 Make my own senses witness 'gainst myself,
 That things I know impossible to be,
 I see as palpable as if they were:
 'Twere worth the acting; but, when I am master
 Of all your mystery, and know, as well
 As you do, that the prodigy's a lie,
 What wanton waste of labour! Livius Drusus,
 I know you are a tool!

Dru. Well, let me be so.

I will not quarrel with you, worthy Caius;
 Call me whate'er you please.

Caius. What barefaced shifting!

What real fierceness could grow tame so soon!
 You turn upon me like a tiger, and
 When open-mouth'd I brave you, straight you play
 The crouching spaniel! You'll not quarrel with me!
 I want you not to quarrel, Livius Drusus,
 But only to be honest to the people.

Dru. Honest!

Caius. Ay, honest! Why do you repeat
 My words, as if you fear'd to trust your own?
 Do I play echo? Question me, and see
 If I so fear to be myself, to act
 The wall, which speaks not but with others' tongues!
 I say you are not honest to the people!—
 I say you are the senate's tool—their bait—
 Their juggler—their trick-merchant! If I wrong you,
 Burst out at once, and, free, retort upon me;
 Tell me I lie, and smite me to the earth!
 I'll rise and, then, embrace you.

Dru. My good Caius,
 Restrain your ardent temper! It betrays you
 Into madness.

Caius. Give me but an answer, and
I'll be content. Are you not leagued with the senate?

Dru. Your wit forsakes you, Caius!

Caius. Will you answer me?

Dru. Throw off this humour!

Caius. Give me an answer, Drusus.

Dru. Madman!

Caius. Are you the creature of the senate?

Dru. Good Caius!

Caius. Do you juggle with the people?

Let me but know you, man, from your own lips;—

There wants but that, you know, to prove the traitor.

Dru. The traitor!

Caius. Ay!

Dru. To whom?

Caius. To the poor people,—

The houseless citizens, that sleep at nights

Beneath the portals, and that starve by day

Under the noses of the senators!

Thou art their magistrate, their friend, their father:

Dost thou betray them? Hast thou sold them? Wilt thou

Juggle them out of the few friends they have left?

Dru. If 'twill content you, Caius, I am one

Who loves alike the senate and the people,—

I am the friend of both.

Caius. The friend of neither!

The senate's tool!—a traitor to the people!

A man that seems to side with neither party;

Will now bend this way, and then make it up,

By leaning a little to the other side:—

With one eye, glance his pity on the crowd,

And with the other, crouch to the nobility!

Such men are the best instruments of tyranny!

The simple slave is easily discern'd

By his external badge: your order wears

The infamy within!

Dru. I'll leave you, Caius,

And hope your breast will harbour better counsels.

Grudge you the senate's kindness to the people?

'Tis well! Whoe'er serves them, shows love to me.

[Goes out, followed by the people, shouting.]

Caius. Go! I have till'd a waste, and, with my sweat,

Brought hope of fruitage forth. The superficial

And heartless soil cannot sustain the shoot:

The first harsh wind that sweeps it, leaves it bare!

Fool that I was to till it! Let them go!

I loved them and I served them!—Let them go!

Enter VETTIVS.

Vet. Why, Caius, what's the matter, that the people
Crowd after Drusus?

Caius. Matter! Know you why
The wind was all the morning in the south,

Sits now at north—Canst show the cause of that ?
 When thou canst tell why turns the fitful wind,
 I'll tell thee why the people follow Drusus !

Vet. More wonder yet ! There stood a group of senators
 Under a portico, and, as they pass'd,
 They cheer'd them—cheer'd the senators ! I thought
 They must be mad.

Caius. No, no ! they are not mad.
 There's not a day in the month, or year, they are
 Of sounder mind. They know as well to-day,
 As they did yesterday, what things they look at—
 That Rome is Rome ; that I am Caius ; he
 They follow, Drusus ; and the senators,
 They cheer, the senators ! They are not mad ;
 But thou art mad to think them so, because
 They act the deeds of madmen !

Enter LICINIUS.

Lic. Caius !—Ha !
 Well met. Bad news !

Caius. Bad news, and well met, say you ?
 Why, so it is : for, were you Pluto's herald,
 You could not pluck a smile from Caius' cheek,
 Would pay the labour of destroying. Come,
 Your news !

Lic. Opimius will be consul.

Caius. Well ;
 I'm tribune.

Lic. Pray you, show yourself among
 The people, else their hearts are lost.
 Your enemies have won them, half, already !
 Orders shake hands !—Patrician and plebeian,
 That walk'd, before, so wide asunder, now
 Go arm in arm !—Quinctius is mate for Curtius,
 That kisses shoulders with him !—Livius, for Servius
 That plucks great Livius by the cloak ; and, then,
 Knits fingers with him, while he whispers in
 His ear, and calls him his "good Livius ;" who
 Leans cheek to him, and smiles, though, all the while
 He cares as much for Servius, as he does
 For Servius' shoe ! Let them not, Caius, have
 The game to themselves ! Dispute it with them ! Come
 Among the people !

Caius. Never did I play
 The beggar yet, nor will I now ! 'Tis not
 My craft, nor will I learn it, Marcus ; no,
 Not e'en to win the people !

Enter POMPONIUS.

Pom. Where is Caius ?

Caius. Here ! here ! What makes the man in such request
 That's out of favour with the people ?

Pom. Look

To your office! Half the votes are promised 'gainst
The next Comitia. Spare no pains to win
The people's favour back again; or, mind!
You are no longer tribune.

Lic. Persuade him not; you will but lose your labour.

Let *us* go to the people, and convince them,
'Tis for their safety, they retain their tribune. [*Goes out.*]

Pom. Follow him, Caius! Seek the people!

Caius. Not a foot

I'll stir to win them. Though the price of their love
Were but the breath that ask'd for't, it should go
Unbought for me! What! would they take our tigers,
They've seen a hundred times tear limb from limb
The malefactor—would they take them, think you,
For dogs, suppose they fawn'd on them? No wonder
And if they should! I will not go among them,
To pay court to them for their own sakes; cry,
"Be served, I pray you, masters! pray you, be served!
Consent that I supply you food; provide you
Clothing and lodging; find you lands to till!"—
While, all the time, they lean the ear to Drusus,
And I must pull them by the cloak to win
Attention! No! No honest man could do it!
I will not go among them! If they are told
That poison's poison, yet will swallow it
For food, in Jove's name, let them! Nothing but
The proving on't will satisfy them. Vettius,
Keep silence! No man further urge me!
I should not—cannot—will not court the people!
[*Goes out, followed by VETTIVS and POMPONIVS.*]

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Street in Rome.*

Enter VETTIVS and POMPONIVS.

Pom. It was a false return. He had their votes,
Though he has lost his office. Lo you, now,
What strides they take that used to walk before
So circumspectly! Scarcely is he brought
Into a private state again, than they
Proceed to abrogate his laws. This blow,
If there it light, where it is meant it should,
Will not fall short a hair's breadth of his life.

Vet. You may be sure of it! To compass that
Opimius got the consulship.

Pom. This morning,
Caius and he met near the Capitol;
Flaccus held Caius by the arm;—Opimius,
On seeing him, makes a dead stand, and then,
With eyes fix'd on him thus, and folded arms,
He follows him right round, and cries to him,
"What, ho! you, Caius Gracchus, whither now?
What plot's on foot?" Then falls on him with such
A torrent of vile terms, as it would sting
The tamest looker-on to hear.

Vet. And how
Did Caius bear it?

Pom. Why, as one that, seeing
A tiger ready couch'd to spring upon him,
In quick avoidance finds security.
He pass'd in silence on. Opimius had
His Candiot troops with him. But where is Flaccus?

Vet. Gone to bring Caius to the Forum. How
Have you disposed our Latin friends?

Pom. About
The rostrum.

Vet. Fear not! If it comes to numbers,
Ours can tell theirs thrice over.

Enter LICINIUS.

Lic. Friends, well met!
Something's on foot that bodes not good to Caius.
I pass'd just now a group of senators:
One of them named him, and had farther spoken,
But that another placed, on seeing me,
His finger on his lip. You may be sure
They only want occasion to despatch him.

Vet. All Rome perceives it. Men inquire for him
As one whom mischief dogs: "Is Caius well?
When saw you him?—Does he go out to-day
To the Forum?"—half under breath, as fearing for
The answer. Others, as his friends pass by,
Lay heads together, and, with eyes glanced towards them,
Whisper with looks, portentous. Some do smile
That never smiled before on aught that loved him.
That's the worse sign! A smile from those that hate us,
Ensures some scowl of fate about to fall,
If not already lowering.

Pom. What's to be done?

Lic. Meet them with force.

Pom. Agreed!

Vet. Agreed!

Lic. Away, then!

If you have any friend as yet unpledged,
Change oaths with him.

Vet. When meet we in the Forum?

Lici. At the third hour—It is the hour of his fate!
If they repeal his laws, farewell to Rome! [*They go out.*]

SCENE II.—*An Apartment in Caius Gracchus's House*
—*two chairs.*

Enter CORNELIA and LICINIA.

Lici. You'll speak to him?

Cor. I will.

Lici. You'll urge him not

To go? You would not throw your richest gem
Away, though you might give't to one who knew
Its value, and would wear it?

Cor. I would not.

Lici. He's coming. [*Going.*] Mother!

Cor. I have said, Licinia. [*LICINIA goes out.*]

Yes; there's a point where virtue ought to stop—
Where she but loses labour. Ha! but is
Her labour ever lost? I can't debate
That question now; Nature won't let me. She's
Too strong, and I must play the humble part
She sets me. Had he not a wife and child—
He's here!

[*Retires.*]

Enter CAIUS GRACCHUS, without seeing his Mother.

Caius. I'll wrestle with him for, at least,
This throw! My laws! What! abrogate my laws!
Oh, insolence of tyranny! Well, well!
We are not so weak as let him. Were he twice
The consul, he shall not lay hands on them;
Yea, though our blood—

Cor. Caius, a word with you.
There's Fulvius Flaccus waiting at the door
With a whole crowd of citizens. Is't you, my son,
They want?

Caius. It is.

Cor. I know it is! My son,
Deal frankly with your mother. What's on foot?
I do not like that Flaccus: he's a man
Hath more ambition than integrity,
And zeal than wisdom. Is he of your counsels?

Caius. He is.

Cor. The sooner then you break with him
The better. Send him word you cannot come.

Caius. My word's already pledged to go with him
To the Forum.

Cor. On what errand, Caius Gracchus?
Is it about your laws, they would annul?
Mind, Caius, you're no longer tribune!

Caius. Fear not;
I shall be prudent.

Cor. [*Holding him.*] Stop, Caius! [*Taking his hand.*] I can
almost think you still

The boy that conn'd his lessons at my knee,
And I could rule in all his little moods
With but a look.—Ay, Caius; but a look
Of your mother's made you calm as sunshine, in
Your biggest storm! I would not lose you, Caius!
Caius, I would not lose you! Go not to
The Forum!

Caius. Mother—is it you!

Cor. Ay, son;
It is your mother,—that is all the mother
Whate'er she seems. I would be still a mother!
I would be left a son, my Caius!—Go not
To the Forum!

Caius. Wherefore, mother? What should I fear
From going to the Forum?

Cor. The Forum saw them shed your brother's blood!
Do I not know you, Caius? Can I not read you,
Without your tongue to help me? Does not his blood
Cry for revenge; and is your ear unapt
To hear it? Caius, that dear brother's death
Gives life to all thy acts! 'Twas that which pleaded
For Vettius—ask'd the tribuneship—revived
Tiberius's laws—defied the senate—made thee
Like a god to Rome, dealing out fate—and, now
Thou art no longer arm'd with thy great office,
Would lead thee forth to sacrifice! My son,
Go not to the Forum! 'Tis a worthless cause!
Why should you go, my Caius? To defend
Your laws from abrogation? Think of them
For whom you made those laws—the fickle people,
That lent a hand to pull you from your seat,
And raise up them, they shake at! Thou art single,—
Thou hast no seconds. 'Tis a hopeless struggle!
So sunk are all, the heart of public virtue
Has not the blood to make it beat again.

Caius. And should I therefore sink with the base times?
What, mother, what? Are the gods also base?
Is virtue base? Is honour sunk? Is manhood
A thing contemptible, not fit to be
Maintain'd? Remember you Messina, mother?
Once from its promontory we beheld
A galley in a storm; and, as the bark
Approach'd the fatal shore, could well discern
The features of the crew with horror all
Aghast, save one. Alone he strove to guide
The prow, erect amidst the horrid war
Of winds and waters raging. With one hand
He ruled the hopeless helm; the other strain'd

The fragment of a shiver'd sail; his brow
 The while bent proudly on the scowling surge,
 At which he scowl'd again. The vessel struck!
 One man alone bestrode the wave, and rode
 The foaming courser safe.—'Twas he, the same!
 You clasp'd your Caius in your arms, and cried,
 "Look, look, my son! the brave man ne'er despairs,
 And lives where cowards die!" I would but make
 Due profit of your lesson.

Cor. Caius—Caius!

Caius. Mother—I—

Cor. What, my son?

Caius. [*Sitting down.*] I'll please you, mother;
 I'll not go to the Forum.—I'll be ruled by you
 If you will. Let men say what they list of me.
 I care not if they whisper as I pass,
 And point, and smile, and say to one another,
 "Lo, the bold tribune, Gracchus! Lo, the man
 That lorded it o'er the senate!" What is't to me?
 I know I am your son, and would approve it
 If I might; but, since you will not have it so,
 I'll stay from the Forum, mother; I'll not go
 To the Forum.

Cor. Know the people you did promise
 To go?

Caius. Are they not here, with Fulvius Flaccus,
 Expecting me? But let them go with *him*;
 He'll speak for them; he'll be their friend; he'll dare
 Oppose the senate; he'll preserve my laws,
 If he can. If there's no other man to speak
 For liberty, he'll do it! Pray you, mother,
 Send Lucius to them; tell them I'll not go
 Abroad to-day.

Cor. You must go to the Forum!

Caius. Not if you will it not.

Cor. I neither will it,
 Nor will it not.

Caius. Unless you bid me go,
 They go without me.

Cor. Why, I think, as it is,
 You cannot help but go. I know not what's
 The matter. 'Tis, perhaps, the fears of thy wife,
 Infect me; but I've dark forebodings, Caius.
 What will be left me, should I lose thee, son?

Caius. My monument!

Cor. Go to the Forum—go!
 You are Cornelia's son!

Caius. My only use
 Of life's to prove it!

Cor. Go—go—go! my Caius!

[*Going, but turns and embraces her son.—They go out
 severally.*]

SCENE III.—*A Square, with the Statue of Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus.*

Enter CAIUS GRACCHUS, TITUS, MARCUS, and Citizens.

Caius. What son of Rome may not his country call
To do her service? Romans, you desire
I should defend your laws from abrogation,
And I obey you.

Tit. Caius! worthy Caius!

Caius. Some coldness there has been between us; but
We know the cause, and so are friends again.
Our enemies may once prevail by craft,
But not a second time. Now show yourselves
The men you should be. If your liberties
And rights are dear to you, be faithful to them.
Fear not the senate; call upon the tribes;
Be freemen—none will dare to make you slaves!

Enter FLACCUS.

Fla. Caius, the consul is about to pass,
Proceeding to the sacrifice, which he
Has order'd, to give impious sanctity
To his designs against you.

Caius. Pray you, now,
My friends, observe good order. Let them pass.

[The Citizens retire.]

MUSIC.—*A Procession of Priests, &c., followed by OPIMIUS as Consul, attended by DRUSUS and Senators.*

Opi. [*Seeing GRACCHUS.*] What! Do you wait to interrupt
us here,—

You, Caius Gracchus, Fulvius, and the rest,
With your lewd rabble?

Caius. You may see, Opimius,
The way is clear for you.

Opi. Oh! is it so?

'Tis well, indeed, you give us leave to pass!
You're very humble now, good Caius Gracchus!
Drusus, is this the man that thought to ride
The necks of the senators? This the lawgiver,
That parcell'd out the lands of the patricians?
Why, yes! 'Tis Caius Gracchus!

Caius. True, Opimius;
'Tis even Caius Gracchus.

Opi. How! so humble?

What! This the gentleman that rail'd at us
The other day with such a fearless tongue?
Call'd us luxurious, proud—oppressors—tyrants,—
The common robbers of the state? This he?
What knave may not grow honest! Speak your soul, man!
Tell us you hate us,—spurn us, mock us, and

Revile us, as you were wont to do! I hate
The double villain. We are not the consul!
These are not lictors! Gracchus does not fear
To let us know his thoughts.

Caius. I will not stay
To give you plea of quarrel. Know, Opimius,
The man that loves his country may respect
The shadow of her greatness.

[*Goes out.*]

Opi. Ha!—Take heed!
Look to your safety! On to the sacrifice.

[*Music.*—OPIMIUS and his party go out.]

Fla. Is this to be endured? Could Caius brook it?
I have no blood of his within my veins,
And yet they boil!

Mar. Had he but spoke the word,
He should have been avenged. He rail'd at us,—
Let's follow him!

Tit. Hold, for the common cause!

Mar. The common cause were served by any hurt
That we could do Opimius. He's a tyrant!

Fla. The worst of tyrants!

Mar. Come, let's follow him, and rid our country of a tyrant!

Tit. Stay! How are we prepared for such a thing?
Remember, too, it is the time of sacrifice.

Fla. Caius was tame to bear it. See! he returns,
And chafing like a flood from its embankment
New burst!

Re-enter CAIUS GRACCHUS.

Caius. Endure a life on sufferance
Like this! Why, you must think me water, friends,
Or something farther still removed from blood—
If there's such poverty in nature—that
I seem to have no proper heat in me,
To keep cool veins under the force of that
Whose only sight, I see, sets yours a-boiling.

Tit. Here comes his lictor with the entrails.

Enter a Lictor, with the entrails.

Lictor. Way, there, evil citizens! [*Goes out.*]

Tit. Down with him! 'Tis an evil word for him.

Citizens. Down with him! [*TITUS and Citizens rush out.*]

Caius. Hold! hold! Come back, my friends—my country-
men!

You know not— [*A loud groan without.*]

Re-enter TITUS, with a bloody dagger.

Tit. You are revenged! He's dead!

Caius. Blood shed! Blood is not wash'd away except
With blood! [*The Citizens return slowly and sullenly.*]
Why do you this? Why do you ever that
You should not do? Who bade you take my quarrel

Into your own hands? Who? I did not ask you
 For help or counsel. Gods! if I resolve
 To stake my life, may I not fix the game
 I throw't away on? Had I not here the tyrant
 Himself, within arm's reach,—that but a stride
 Like this, had made my weapon and his heart
 Acquainted? Had I not? If I did think
 A gust of spleen, a fit of temper, a
 Sour stomach, was a thing to pitch against
 The cause,—had I not man enough in me,
 Though thrice the number of his satellites
 Environ'd him, to smite him to my foot?
 And you must smite his slave! Now, look you, for
 That slave, the stones we tread on shall weep blood,
 And our veins lend the tears!

Fla. Remember, 'twas
 For you they did it.

Caius. Me? Oh! I retain
 The memory of all they have done for me!

Fla. Observe their looks: they are depress'd and spiritless
 From your rebuke. It is not well to bring
 Their zeal to such an ebb.

Caius. It is, indeed,
 The tide for ebbing. [*Thunder.*] Listen! Do you hear?

Tit. The heavens lower——

Caius. On us! There is something awful in their speech,
 More than the sound. [*Thunder again.*] That's anger!

Enter VETTIVS, hastily.

Vet. Disperse! disperse! The consul heavily
 Has ta'en his lictor's death. The senate is
 Convoked. [*Louder thunder, the Citizens withdraw slowly.*]

Caius. Now it speaks out. 'Tis not for naught
 They keep that stirring in the heavens. Some foot,
 On haste with wrath, hath from Jove's presence now
 Gone forth, the bearer of an errand, whose
 Dread import hath set all Olympus shaking!

Fla. You are infusing fear into the crowd:
 This is no way to remedy the evil.
 Think what can best be done.

Caius. Nothing is best,
 Where nothing can be done.

Fla. Here comes your brother.

Enter LICINIUS, hastily.

Lic. A decree has pass'd the senate, that the consul
 Look to the public safety. Caius, you,
 And Fulvius Flaccus, are the men they aim at;
 You must protect yourselves! [*Thunders still louder.*]

Fla. Observe, the citizens fall off from us.

Caius. Why, let them go! As long as our veins are full,
 Why should theirs flow? Let them fall off to one—

To none ! Their carrion would but poison Rome,
 And breed a mortal, general pestilence !
 Let them, I say ! It shall be writ in blood,
 The man who labours for the people's good,
 The people shall give up to sacrifice !
 So shall their groans unpitied rend their breasts,—
 Unheeded, save of them whose ears confess
 No sweeter music ! Here, even at the foot
 Of my great father's statue, I will brave
 The tyrant's wrath alone !

[Kneels at his father's statue, hiding his face with his hands.]

Fla. What ! hold your neck
 To the axe ?

Enter POMPONIUS, hastily.

Pom. Caius, the consul's lictors, I'm advised,
 Are on the watch for you.

Fla. Meet force with force !

[The Citizens return in larger numbers.]

The people throng to you again. 'Twas but
 The storm dispersed them. Not for yourself, alone,
 Consent to draw the sword, but for your friends,
 As well, proscribed along with you ; nor, yet,
 For them, but for your country, on whose neck
 The tyrant plants his foot ! Art thou the man
 To let her lie there, when no arm but thine
 Can lift her thence ? Look on the people !—See !
 They stretch their hands to thee ! A word, each hand
 Will grasp a weapon !

The People. Caius !

Caius. You prevail !

Against myself, I pledge myself. O Rome !
 The sons do love thee most, must help thy foes
 To shed thy blood ! To-morrow, friends ! to-morrow !

[They go out.]

SCENE IV.—*An Apartment in the House of Caius
 Gracchus—a couch.*

*Enter CORNELIA and LICINIA, with a scroll, followed by LUCIUS,
 carrying lights.*

Cor. Will not you go to bed ?

Lici. Not till he comes.

Cor. He must sup out.

Lici. Well, I'll sit up for him.

Cor. What, with those eyes, that look so ill prepared
 To play the watcher ?

Lici. I will read, Cornelia,
 And keep myself awake. I can't lie down ;
 Go you to bed, my mother.

Cor. I'll not give you
Excuse for so uncall'd-for labour, by
Partaking it. Good night!

Lici. Good night! [*CORNELIA goes out, followed by LUCIUS.*
I wish

He would come home! Why should he sup abroad

To-night? Most like, it is my brother's fault:

He never lets him rest with taking him

To Carbo's house—or Flaccus'—or some friends.

I would Licinius had a wife himself,

To keep him more at home. Cornelia's right;

I'm half-asleep already. A heavy lid

Is strange companion to an anxious heart!

Come, thou, that canst discourse without a tongue,—

Cunning beguiler of the lonely! talk to me,

And, for my dear lord, help me to keep watch!

[*She sits on the couch, and reads—grows gradually
drowsier—the scroll falls from her hand, and she
sleeps.*

Enter CAIUS GRACCHUS, without seeing her.

Caius. What meant the boy by starting when he let
Me in? What's in my face to make him hold
His breath, and change his colour at? I thought
At first the house was not my own; never, yet,
Felt it so like my own! A hundred objects,
Day after day I've pass'd, with just as much
Of consciousness as they had not been here,
I now distinguish with a feeling of
Such recognition, as invest them with
The worth of things most precious.—What! Licinia!
Asleep, too! She is sitting up for me!
Come, now, Conspiracy, thou bold redresser
Of grievances, doubly stak'st thy life!
Thou wilt achieve beneath the peaceful brows
Of household eaves, that never thought to see it,
What were done better in the ruthless eyes
Of frowning battlements—and lead along
The streets, where children, wives, and matrons tread,
Mars' revels, fitter to be acted on
Some far-removed, unfrequented waste,—
Come, now! and, while the silken bands of sleep
Hold thy unconscious, unoffending victim,
Look on, and scan thy plea of conjuration,
And see if it be proof! Thou canst not do it!
Already is the ague creeping o'er
Thy flesh, at longer trial of the test
Would shake the weapon from thy hand, though clench'd
With thousand oaths! That I should see her thus!

Lici. [*In her sleep.*] Keep him in, mother! Let him not go
forth!
They'll kill my Caius!

Caius. She is dreaming of me.

Lici. [*At first in her sleep, then awaking and rushing forward.*]

Oh, spare him! save him! give him to his wife!

Strike here—strike here! [*CAIUS catches her in his arms.*]

My Caius!—'Twas a dream!

But press me to thy heart; speak to me, Caius!

I know 'tis you; but press me—speak to me!

Oh! 'twas a fearful dream!

Cornelia. [*Entering.*] Who talks of dreams

At such an hour of night? Go, sleep and dream!

Lici. O, mother! such a dream!—And dreams are omens!

Cor. Omens, or not; dreams have precursors, well

As sequences! Your scared thoughts to-day

Were likely to give birth to pleasant dreams!

I marvel that you had one! One may dream,

Without the aid of sleep. You have been dreaming

E'er since you rose this morning; and the spectre

You saw with seal'd lids, just now, be sure

With open ones you started for yourself,—

And more than once before! Caius was out

All day—besieged with business that allow'd

No breathing-time. Look at him!—He's fatigued—

Worn out—wants rest! A seasonable time

To hold him, prating to him of a dream!

To bed, my son; for you must rise, I know,

Betimes. Licinia, if you love his health,

Don't waste the hour that's due to needful sleep,

And scant enough!—Away! Good night, Licinia!

Caius, to bed at once.—My son, good night!

[*LICINIA and CAIUS go out.*]

Good night, indeed! And is't my son whom, thus,

I bid good night, without a hope to see

The morning of his living face again?

He's pledged!—He has conspired! I took my measures

To gather note of all. No other course

Was left him. I'm content! Better my son

Die in confronting, than in bowing to,

The tyrant! But the chances?—There's no chance!

They'll fail him, as they fail'd Tiberius!

Though vain the struggle, yet 'tis fit 'twere made,

When bold injustice scoffs at laws, and 'gins

To ride it, rough-shod, o'er them! What's my son?

His noble name! that, scatheless, who shall dare

To call me motherless? A mother once,

Arming her son against his country's foes,

Gave him his shield, with charge to bring it back,

Or come back borne upon it. In my heart,

I feel two mothers, struggling! Was it thus

With her?—And, if it was, the nobler conquer'd;

And shall the weaker rule in Scipio's daughter?

My father answers, "No!"—Rome answers, "No!"

Cornelia, "No!" Caius is dead, [*CAIUS enters.*] but not

His name! His enemies may strike at that,
 But not a thousand blows could leave a scar!
 He sided with the weak and wrong'd,—resisted
 The wrongful and the strong,—in vain!—but, when
 His country fell, he fell along with her!

Caius. [*Kneeling and catching CORNELIA's hand.*] My mother!

Cor. [*Bursting into a passion of tears.*] Caius!—Oh! my son!
 my son! [*Curtain falls.*]

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*The Street before Caius's House—lamps at a distance.*

Citizens discovered lying asleep in various postures, armed—others watching.

Enter TITUS.

Tit. Almost the morning dawns. What! rouse ye, friends!
 Up, drowsy comrades, up! 'Tis time—'tis time! [*They rise.*]

Enter CAIUS GRACCHUS from the house.

Caius. Ha! is it time, my friends?

Tit. It is, good Caius.

Caius. What noise of steps is that?

Tit. A band of citizens,
 Crossing the end of the street.

Caius. Go on before, my friends; I'll follow you.

[*TITUS and Citizens go out.*]

I will but take a last look of the house.

To think of what I leave within that house!

I left her sleeping. Gods! upon the brink

Of what a precipice!—and she must down,—

I cannot save her. As I stole away,

She breathed my name, withal, so plaintively,

It tax'd my manhood not to turn again!

'Tis done!—My thought must look another way!

Tiberius—I am coming! Art thou here,

My brother, waiting for me? Yes, I feel

Thou art! I am ready! Mighty shade, lead on! [*Going.*]

Enter LICINIA, hastily.

Lici. [*Rushing towards him.*] Caius!—Oh! have I found you?

Caius. My Licinia,
 Why do you quit your bed?

Lici. To seek you, Caius.
To bring you back with me! Come into the house.

Caius. What fear you, love?

Lici. I know not what I fear,
But well I know that I have cause to fear!
Your putting off your journey yesterday—
Your going to the Forum, as you did—
Your making it so late ere you came back—
Your looks, I now recall, when you did come back—
Your rising now, at this unwonted hour,—
A thousand thousand things that I could name,
Had I the time to number them, forewarn me
You go not forth for good!

Caius. Licinia! wife!

Collect yourself, and listen. Be content
That I go forth, and may not be prevented.
Why, what's the matter with you? Can't a man
Get up a little hour or two, before
His wonted time, and take a walk, but he
Must run into a lion's mouth? For shame!
If this were told of Caius' wife! Go in;
Get thee to bed again; and take this kiss
Along with thee.

Lici. I cannot quit you, Caius,—
I cannot let you go! Spite of myself,
I cling to you as though it were a spell
That bound my arms around you. I am ill, love;
I'm very ill! in sooth, I am so ill,
It is not kind of you to leave me, Caius.
Caius, you would not leave me when I'm ill?
You surely never would! Let me lean on you,
And take me into the house. I thank you, Caius.

Caius. [*Conducting her to the door, and stopping.*] There!

Lici. Would you quit me at the threshold? Won't you
Come in, too? Do come in!—You will come in!
You can go forth by-and-by.

Caius. I must go forth

At once, love.

Lici. Must? In truth you must not—shall not!

Caius. [*Going.*] Farewell!

Lici. Stop, Caius—stop! [*Following him, catching hold of his robe, and discovering a sword under his arm.*] Is it to use
That sword you go abroad? Is it, my husband?
It is!—I see it all! You would go forth
To sell your life for an ungrateful people;
To quit your wife and child for cowards who
Look'd tamely on and saw your brother murder'd,
And now will play the craven game with you.
You trust the faith of men that have no faith
Except when trial is not near. My Caius!
My lord! my husband! father of my child!
Go not, but hear your poor distracted wife!

Caius. Licinia, now, is it perverse in you
To fancy danger. I have business forth.
Is it a time to walk the streets unarm'd,
When drunken revellers from breaking up
Of banquets are abroad? No more of this!
In—in! my love. Be sure I'll make all haste.
Thy thin robe suits not, Sweet, the morning air.
In, my Licinia, in! Dismiss your fears! [*Trumpet without.*]
Lici. What's that? [*Trumpet again.*] Again! Speaks not
that summoner

To thee?

Caius. Dear wife—

Lici. Come into the house—come in!
If I'm thy wife, whose interest in thee
Shall push by mine? Whose claim to hold thy pledge
Calls on thee with a right that cancels mine?
Thou shalt not go! [*Trumpet.*]

Caius. Licinia—

Lici. Nay, thou shalt not!

Caius. Let go my robe!

Lici. I will not let it go!

You hurt me, Caius!—Know you, you do hurt me?
For Juno's sake, dear husband! Caius—oh!
You gripe my wrist till I am sick with the pain!—
If any one had told it! Promise one thing,
And I will let thee go.

Caius. What is it?

Lici. Kill me!

Caius. [*Catching her to his breast.*] Licinia!

Lici. [*Nearly fainting in his arms.*] Ah!

Caius. Gods! I have killed thee!

Lici. No!

Or, if you have, 'tis with a sudden draught
Of too sweet life! Bless thee, my Caius—bless thee!
You will not go—you'll stay with me—you'll come with me—
You'll live for me! Come in! come in! come in!

Enter LICINIUS.

Lic. What keeps you, Caius?

Caius. [*Apart to him.*] Take her from about
My neck.

Lici. I hear you, Caius! There! Myself
Will do that kindness for thee. Thou art free
To go. Stay, husband! Give me from about
Thy neck that collar which thou wear'st, to keep it
As thy last gift.

Caius. Here, my Licinia.

Lici. What!

Nothing about me I can give thee in
Exchange for't? Oh! I have a token yet,
That hath the virtue of an amulet
To him that values it. I have been told,

Steel, at its sight, hath all as harmless turn'd
 As point of down, that cannot stand against
 The tender breath. Swear only, you will stay
 Until I fetch it. *[She goes out hurriedly.]*

Caius. Go!—I swear it, love!

Lic. Now Caius,
 Now is your time! wait not till she returns.

Caius. I have sworn to her.

Lic. And if you swore to her
 To pluck an eye out, would you think it kinder
 To do't than leave't undone? Away, at once!
 The cause—the cause!

Re-enter LICINIA, hastily, with her Child.

Lici. Thy boy, my Caius!

Caius. Ha!

Lici. Nay, if thou look'st so cold upon thy child,
 I'm satisfied no hope remains for me!

Caius. Now, was this kind?

Lici. I do not know that word.

It stands for nothing—worse! 'tis found the thing
 It says it is not! Husbands are call'd kind,
 That break the foolish hearts which treasure them;
 And fathers, who make orphans of their children!
 And brothers, who are worse than bloodless strangers!
 And friends, whose actions prove them deadliest foes!
 More kind are foes that don't pretend they're kind! *[Kneels.]*

Lic. Come, Caius! Caius, come!

Caius. Why dost thou kneel?

Lici. To beg the gods for mercy on my child,
 Since thou hast none for him, nor yet for me!

Caius. Tear me away! More blessings light upon you
 Than I feel pangs, who curse the things I'd bless!

[CAIUS GRACCHUS and LICINIUS go out—alarums continue.]

Enter CORNELIA from the house, followed by LUCILLA and LUCIUS.

Cor. How's this? Licinia!

Lici. Take the child from me,
 Until I lay me down and die.

Cor. And die!

Rise, rise, my daughter!

Lici. Rather thou fall down
 Along with me, and pray the gods they send
 A thunderbolt to strike us both together!
 For both already they have smitten so,
 To spare is mocking mercy!

Cor. Rise!—Nay rise. *[Lifts LICINIA up.]*
 We may not tempt the gods! Come into the house,
 And show thy tears to it—'twon't tell upon thee.

This is the common street, and thou but lend'st
The essence of thy grief to vilest tongues,
Who will but jest at it. Come in! Come in!

Lici. You counsel me, and do not know the cause
Whereon you counsel me.

Cor. My son is dead?

Lici. No, no! Yet—

Cor. Yet! Why wouldst thou say he lives,
And but that little word 'twixt him and death?
He is the same as dead;—then think him dead,
As I do!

Lici. And art thou a mother?

Cor. Yes;

The mother of the virtue of my child!
The fashion of his body nature fix'd;—
I had no choice in't—was not ask'd how high
The stature on't should grow—gave not my voice
As to the shape of limb or lineament,
Nor pick'd the shade and texture of the skin;—
But, of his worth, the modelling was mine:
Say, that is dead, and he and I are dead!

Lici. I cannot answer this. I can but marvel,
The weight which bows me down should seem so light
To you. *[Alarums without.]*

Enter LIVIA, hurriedly.

Livia. Cornelia!

Cor. What's to fear, Livia.

Livia. Those dreadful noises! Listen—you will hear
The rush of feet on every side. I've pass'd
Such groups of angry-looking men—some pale—
Some flush'd—some mute, and others muttering
To one another—hurrying all one way,
As all on one momentous object bent.
I came to thee, that we might seek some sanctuary;
For houses are not safe in times like these.

Cor. The Temple of Diana is at hand;
We shall go thither. See, my Livia,
How lost Licinia is! Take hold of her,
And lead the way. Nobly, ye gods! oh, nobly! *[They go out.]*

SCENE II.—*Mount Aventine.*

*Enter groups of armed Citizens, CAIUS GRACCHUS, FULVIUS
FLACCUS, and LICINIUS.*

Caius. You see—you see! Their very trumpets shake
Your ranks. How will they stand the blows of those
Whose only breath can stagger?

Lic. What! No truce?

Fla. Twice have we offer'd terms of peace, which they

Have twice refused, and into prison cast
Our herald, my own son; and not content
With this, they have proclaim'd reward to him
Who brings your brother's head, its weight in gold!

Caius. Then shall they have it at a dearer price—
The safety of my friends!

Enter POMPONIUS.

Pom. Why stand you here?
Advance! A rumour spreads among our ranks,
That pardon is proclaim'd to those who quit us;
And many friends fall off.

Caius. It shall be so!
Call back the runaways, and let them save
The honour of their manhood! Husbands! drive out
Your sad foreboding thoughts; your wives shall hear
Your feet to-night upon the threshold. Sons!
Check not your pious tears, but let them flow
For joy; your mothers have not lost their props!
Cowards! relax not your strain'd sinews yet,
But live redoubted! Brave hearts! rein your courage,
To give it course upon a fairer field:
Caius alone shall bleed!

Vet. What mean you, Caius?

Caius. To yield myself into the consul's hands,
And save these veins their stores!

Vet. No, by the gods,
You shall not do it!

Caius. Not! Why should I live
At such a price as half these lives, which I
Can, singly dying, spare? I cannot live
To give my country freedom: let me die
To save her blood!

Enter VETTIVS.

Lic. What are your swords about?
Sheathe them or use them.

Caius. Friends, draw off our force;
I'll meet them singly!

Lic. Never!
We'll live or die together! Or, take your course,—
Yield yourself to the tyrant, if you will!
My sword is out, and shall not quit my grasp,
So long as it can strike a link away
From the vile chains that gall us! Leave us, Caius,—
Desert us—fly us—carry with thee half
Our strength! With the remaining half we'll struggle,
Nor vilely live the thralls of tyranny!

Caius. Oh, Rome, my country!—Oh, my mother Rome!
Is it to shed thy blood I use my sword?
To fill thy matrons' and thy daughters' eyes

With tears, and drain the spirits of thy sons?
 Should I not rather turn it 'gainst myself,
 And, by the timely sacrifice of one,
 Preserve the many? They will not let me do it;
 They take from me the rule of mine own acts,
 And make me Freedom's slave! What! is it so?
 Come, then, the only virtue that is left me,—
 The fatal virtue of necessity.
 Upon them!
 Give them stout hearts, ye gods! to enable them
 To stand the flashing of their tyrants' swords!
 Deaf to the din of battle let them be!
 Senseless to wounds, and without eyes for blood;
 That, for this once, they may belie themselves;
 Make tyranny to cower, and, from her yoke,
 Lift prostrate Liberty, to fall no more. [*They go out.*]

SCENE III.—*The Interior of the Temple of Diana—the Statue
 of the Goddess—a large Portal.*

LICINIA, *kneeling by the Statue*—CORNELIA, LIVIA, LUCILLA
*(with Gracchus's Child), LUCIUS, and numerous Females, who
 had fled for safety to the Temple, discovered.*

Cor. [To LUCIUS.] Go, boy; look out, and tell me what thou
 see'st.

If all is quiet, run to the end of the street,
 But venture not beyond—and listen if
 Thou hear'st the sound of tumult. Use thy senses,
 And hurry back; and, mind, keep bounds.

[LUCIUS goes out.]

Livia. [To one of the Females.] Observe
 Cornelia! Now what kind of soul is hers,
 That in this hour of trembling can be calm,
 As nought but common things were passing round her?
 But note her!

Cor. Livia, you did say just now,
 Your brother told you there had come a herald
 Proposing terms of peace.

Livia. He did; but thought
 They would not be accepted.

Cor. He thought right;
 No more they will. Opimius hath the gust
 Too strong for blood, when he hath snuff'd it, not
 To taste. He'll lap it: matters not whose veins
 'Twill cost the emptying of, so they belong
 To honest men. Then will he offer sacrifice!
 Oh, man! man! man!—most sacrilegious and
 Profane!—that, with thy lips, dost laud the gods,

Whose ordinance thou tearest with thy hands!
 The path to whom thou hast so thick beset
 With peril, he who seeks may find it out
 By many a grave which marks the spot, whereon
 The truly noble fell! Why clasp you me,
 My Livia?

Livia. Do you hear the clash of swords?

Cor. Indeed I do not. 'Tis your fancy, Livia.

Livia. Nay, 'tis your talking of men's graves.

Cor. Men's graves

Are but men's beds; whereon we lay them, not
 For one hard day of toil to follow on
 Another! Thankless labour, Livia—sweat,
 To him expends it profitless—that goes
 To nourish others, and they take, as though
 The using were a boon! How fares it with
 Licinia?

Livia. All abstracted, as she were
 Alive to naught without her. I can draw
 No word nor sign from her. There kneels she to
 The statue of the goddess, mute as silence,
 And in so fix'd a stillness, you might ask,
 Which is the marble?

A Soldier. [Without.] Way, there! Let me in!

Cor. Open the gates, and let him in.

Livia. Who is it?

Cor. One is wounded from the fray. 'Tis going on!
 I fear that Lucius has gone nearer to it
 Than I commanded.

Livia. And thou hast a son
 Is in it.

Cor. Livia! Livia! I'm a mother,
 Although I do not wail to let you know it!

Re-enter LUCIUS.

Now, sir, where have you been? Your face is flush'd;
 Finely you've mark'd my orders! Tell me what
 You've seen and heard?

Luc. The battle is begun.

Cor. I know it already. Can you tell which side
 Is like to win?

Luc. The citizens, they say,
 Give ground.

Livia. They do!

Cor. I could have told it you,
 Without the aid of augury. How learn'd
 You this?

Luc. From some that carried to his house
 The young Valerius, wounded mortally.

Cor. That's right; you speak not out of breath, as though
 The house were on fire. Valerius, say you?

Luc. Yes.

I scarcely knew him as they bore him by,
His face so gash'd.

Livia. Oh!

Cor. Hear you, sir! Now know
Yourself a man! You have been nearer to
The fray than you like to tell. You're a fine boy!
What rush of feet is that? Go see.

[*LUCIUS goes out and returns.*]

Luc. The citizens

Fly every way; and from the windows and
The houses' top, the women look and wring
Their hands, and wail, and clamour. Listen! you
Will hear them.

Cor. I can hear them without ears.

Caius Gracchus. [*Without.*] Shut to the gates!

[*LUCIUS goes out.*]

Lici. [*Starting up.*] 'Tis Caius!

Caius. [*Without.*] Thankless hearts!

Not one presents himself to aid my sword,
Or lend a charger to assist my flight;
But as I were a racer in the games,
They cry "Make haste!" and shout as I pass by!

Enter CAIUS GRACCHUS.

May they remain the abject things they are,
Begging their daily pittance from the hands
Of tyrant lords that spurn them! May they crawl
Ever in bondage and in misery,
And never know the blessed rights of freemen!
Here will I perish!

Lici. [*Rushing to him.*] Caius!

Caius. My Licinia!

My mother, too!—My child, too!

Enter VETTIVS.

Vet. Caius here!

Alas! my friend, you are lost! Pomponius and
Licinius, striving to keep back the consul,
And give you time for flight, have fallen beneath
His hirelings' blows. They have the scent of you:
Another minute, they're upon you!

Cor. Caius, embrace me!

The gods do bare no sword 'gainst virtue!

Caius. No!

My mother! My Licinia! give me my child.

[*Aside to CORNELIA.*] Mother, be you a parent to my wife,

A tutor to my boy. The lessons you

Did make me con, teach him—none else; he cannot

Learn better. [*Places the child in CORNELIA'S arms.*] My

Licina, pardon me! [*Embraces her.*]

Cor. She scarcely heeds thee! Son, what feel you for
Beneath your cloak?

Caius. Nothing, will hurt me, mother;
But only balk our tyrants. Rome! O Rome!

[*A dagger drops from beneath CAIUS's robe—he falls dead—LICINIA, shrieking, throws herself on the body—CORNELIA, with difficulty, supports herself—the Consul and his troops are heard approaching—she makes a violent effort to recover her self-possession. Enter OPIMIUS and his party, with Guards, Lictors, &c. CORNELIA holds up the child in one hand, and with the other points to the body of CAIUS—OPIMIUS and the rest stand fixed in amazement—Flourish, and the curtain falls.*

END OF CAIUS GRACCHUS.

VIRGINIUS :

A Tragedy.

DEDICATED TO WILLIAM MACREADY, ESQ.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

(AS ORIGINALLY PERFORMED AT COVENT GARDEN IN 1820.)

<i>Appius Claudius</i> ..	} Decemvirs	{	Mr. ABBOT.
<i>Spurius Oppius</i> ...			Mr. WHITE.
<i>Vibulanus</i>			Mr. JEFFERIES.
<i>Honorius</i>	} Patricians	{	Mr. NORRIS.
<i>Valerius</i>			Mr. VEDY.
<i>Caius Claudius</i> ...	} Clients to Appius ..	{	Mr. CONNOR.
<i>Marcus</i>			Mr. CLAREMONT.
<i>Dentatus</i>	A Veteran		Mr. TERRY.
<i>Virginus</i>	A Centurion		Mr. MACREADY.
<i>Numitorius</i>	His Brother-in-law ..		Mr. EGERTON.
<i>Icilius</i>	In love with Virginia		Mr. C. KEMBLE.
<i>Lucius</i>	Brother of Icilius ..		Mr. COMER.
<i>Publius</i>	} Soldiers	{	Mr. MEARS.
<i>Decius</i>			Mr. TREBY.
<i>Sextus</i>			Mr. CRUMPTON.
<i>Titus</i>	} Citizens	{	Mr. FAUCIT.
<i>Servius</i>			Mr. ATKINS.
<i>Cneius</i>			Mr. KING.
<i>Virginia</i>	{ Daughter of Virgi- nius	{	Miss FOOTE.
<i>Servia</i>	Her Nurse		Mrs. FAUCIT.
<i>Female Slave</i>			Mrs. CHIPP.

Citizens (male and female), Soldiers, Lictors, &c.

SCENE, CHIEFLY ROME.

PROLOGUE,

BY J. H. REYNOLDS, ESQ.

SPOKEN BY MISS BOOTH.

[*Speaking behind.*] Nay, Mr. Fawcett, give me leave, I pray :
The audience wait, and I must have my way. [Enters.
What ! curb a woman's tongue !—as I'm alive,
The wretch would mar our old prerogative !
Ladies ! by very dint of pertinacity,
Have I preserved the glory of loquacity.

Oh ! could you gaze, as I am gazing now,
And see each man behind with gather'd brow,
And clenched hand (though nought my spirit damps),
Beckoning, with threats, my presence from the lamps :
Each, as I broke my way, declared how well
His art could woo you—to be peaceable !
One is well robed—a second greatly shines,
In the nice balance—of *cast-iron* lines ;
A third can sing—a fourth can touch your tears—
A fifth—"I'll see no more !"—a fifth appears,
Who hath been once in Italy, and seen Rome ;
In short—there's quite a hubbub in the Green-Room.
But I—a very woman—careless, light—
Fleet idly to your presence, this fair night ;
And, craving your sweet pardon, fain would say
A kind word for the poet and his play.

To-night, no idle nondescript lays waste
The fairy and yet placid bower of taste :
No story, piled with dark and cumbrous fate,
And words, that stagger under their own weight ;
But one of silent grandeur—simply said,
As though it were awaken'd from the dead !
It is a tale—made beautiful by years ;—
Of pure, old Roman sorrow—old in tears !
And those you shed o'er it in childhood may
Still fall—and fall—for sweet Virginia !

Nor doth a crownéd poet of the age
Call the sweet spirits from the historic page !
No old familiar dramatist hath spun
This tragic, antique web, to-night—but one,
An unknown author, in a sister land,
Waits, in young fear, the fiat of your hand.

VIRINIUS.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Street in Rome.*

Enter SERVIVS and CNEIVS.

Ser. Carbo denied a hearing!

Cng. Ay, and Marcellus cast into prison, because he sued a friend of one of the decemvirs for a sum of money he had lent him.

Ser. And Appius resisted not? Appius, that in the first decemvirate was a god to the people!

Cne. Resisted not! Nay, was most loud in favour of the decree; but hither comes Virinius, who interested himself so much in Carbo's affair. He looks a little heated. Is not that Titus he is speaking to? Stand aside, master, and listen.

Enter VIRINIUS and TITUS.

Virinius. Why did you make him decemvir, and first decemvir too?

Tit. We had tried him, and found him honest.

Virinius. And could you not have remained content? Why try him again to find him dishonest? Knew ye not he was a patrician, and of the Claudian family?

Tit. He laid down the consulate—

Virinius. Ha! ha! ha!—to be elected into the decemvirate, and he was so; and he laid down his office of decemvir to be re-elected into the decemvirate, and he is so; ay, by Jupiter! and to the exclusion of his late colleagues! Did not Titus Genutius lay down the consulate?

Tit. He did.

Virinius. Was he not next to Appius in the decemvirate?

Tit. He was.

Virinius. Did you not find him honest?

Tit. We did find him honest.

Virinius. As honest as Appius Claudius?

Tit. Quite as honest.

Virinius. Quite as honest!—and why not re-elect him decemvir? Most sapient people! You re-elect Appius into the decemvirate for his honesty, and you thrust Titus out of the decemvirate—I suppose for his honesty also! Why, Appius was sick of the decemvirate.

Ser. I never heard him say so.

Virginius. But he did say so—say so in my hearing; in presence of the senators Valerius and Caius Claudius, and I don't know how many others. 'Twas known to the whole body of the senate—not that he was sick, but that he said so. Yes, yes; he and his colleagues, he said, had done the work of the republic for a whole year, and it was now but just to grant them a little repose, and appoint others to succeed them.

Tit. Well, well, we can only say he changed his mind.

Virginius. No, no, we needn't say that neither! As he had laboured in the decemvirate, perhaps he thought he might as well repose in the decemvirate.

Tit. I know not what he thought. He is decemvir, and we made him so, and cannot help ourselves. Fare you well, Virginius. Come, let's to the Forum.

[TITUS, SERVIUS, and CNEIUS go out.]

Virginius. You cannot help yourselves! Indeed you cannot: You help'd to put your masters on your backs:

They like their seat, and make you show your paces.

They ride you—sweat you—curb you—lash you—and

You cannot throw them off with all your mettle!

But here comes one, whose share in giving you

To such unsparing riders, touches me

More nearly, for that I've an interest

In proving him a man of fair and most

Erect integrity. Good day, Icilius.

Enter ICILIUS.

Icil. Worthy Virginius! 'tis an evil day
For Rome, that gives her more convincing proof,
The thing, she took for hope, is but a base
And wretched counterfeit! Our new decemvirs
Are anything but friends to justice and
Their country.

Virginius. You, Icilius, had a hand
In their election. You applied to me
To aid you with my vote in the comitia:
I told you then, and tell you, now, again,
I am not pleased when a patrician bends
His head to a plebeian's girdle. Mark me!
I'd rather he should stand aloof, and wear
His shoulder high—especially the nephew
Of Caius Claudius.

Icil. I would have pledged my life—

Virginius. 'Twas a high gage, and men have staked a higher
On grounds as poor as yours—their honour, boy!

Icilius, I have heard it all—your plans—

The understanding 'twixt the heads of the people—

Of whom, Icilius, you are reckon'd one, and

Worthily—and Appius Claudius—all!—

'Twas every jot disclosed to me.

Icil. By whom?

Virginius. Siccus Dentatus.

Icil. He disclosed it to you?
Siccius Dentatus is a crabbéd man.

Virginius. Siccius Dentatus is an honest man!
There's not a worthier in Rome! How now!
Has he deceived me? Do you call him liar?
My friend! my comrade! honest Siccius,
That fought in six-score battles!

Icil. Good Virginius,
Siccius Dentatus is my friend—the friend
Of every honest man in Rome—a brave man—
A most brave man. Except yourself, Virginius,
I do not know the man I prize above
Siccius Dentatus—yet he's a crabbéd man.

Virginius. Yes, yes; he is a crabbéd man.

Icil. A man
Who loves too much to wear a jealous eye.
Virginius. No, not a whit, where he sees double dealing.
You are the best judge of your own concerns;
Yet, if it please you to communicate
With me upon this subject, come and see me.
I told you, boy, I favour'd not this stealing
And winding into place. What he deserves,
An honest man dares challenge 'gainst the world—
But come and see me. Appius Claudius, chosen
Decemvir, and his former colleagues, that
Were quite as honest as himself, not chosen—
No, not so much as named by him, who named
Himself, and his new associates! Well, 'tis true,
Dog fights with dog, but honesty is not
A cur, that baits his fellow—and e'en dogs,
By habit of companionship, abide
In terms of faith and cordiality—
But come and see me.

Icil. Appius comes!
The people still throng after him with shouts,
Unwilling to believe their Jupiter
Has mark'd them for his thunder. Will you stay,
And see the homage that they render him?

Virginius. Not I! Stay you; and, as you made him,
hail him;
And shout, and wave your hand, and cry, "Long live
Our first and last decemvir, Appius Claudius!"
For he is first and last, and every one!
Rome owes you much, Icilius—Fare you well—
I shall be glad to see you at my house. [*VIRGINIUS goes out.*]

*Enter APPIUS CLAUDIUS, SICCIUS DENTATUS, LUCIUS,
TITUS, SERVIUS, MARCUS, and Citizens, shouting.*

Tit. Long live our first decemvir!
Long live Appius Claudius!
Most noble Appius! Appius and the decemvirate for ever!
[*Citizens shout.*]

App. My countrymen and fellow-citizens,
We shall deserve your favour.

Tit. You have deserved it,
And will deserve it.

App. For that end we named
Ourself decemvir.

Tit. You could not have named a better man.

Den. For his own purpose (*Aside*).

App. Be assured, we hold
Our power but for your good. Your gift it was :
And gifts make surest debtors. Fare you well—
And, for your salutations, pardon me
If I repay you only with an echo—
Long live the worthy citizens of Rome !

[*APPIUS and friends go out.*]

Den. That was a very pretty echo!—a most soft echo. I
never thought your voices were half so sweet ! A most melo-
dious echo ! I'd have you ever after make your music before
the patricians' palaces. They give most exquisite responses !
—especially that of Appius Claudius ! A most delicate echo !

Tit. What means Dentatus ?

Ser. He's ever carping—nothing pleases him.

Den. Oh ! yes—you please me—please me mightily, I assure
you.—You are noble legislators, take most especial care of
your own interests, bestow your votes most wisely too—on
him who has the wit to get you into the humour ; and, withal,
have most musical voices—most musical—if one may judge by
their echo.

Tit. Why, what quarrel have you with our choice ? Could
we have chosen better ?—I say they are ten honest decemvirs
we have chosen.

Den. I pray you name them me.

Tit. There's Appius Claudius, first decemvir—

Den. Ay, call him the head. You are right. Appius Clau-
dius, the head. Go on !

Tit. And Quintus Fabius Vibulanus—

Den. The body, that eats and drinks while the head thinks.
Call him Appius's stomach. Fill him, and keep him from cold
and indigestion, and he'll never give Appius the headache !
Well ?—There's excellent comfort in having a good stomach !
—Well ?

Tit. There's Cornelius, Marcus Servilius, Minucius, and
Titus Antonius—

Den. Arms, legs, and thighs !

Tit. And Marcus Rabuleius—

Den. He'll do for a hand, and, as he's a senator, we'll call
him the right-hand. We couldn't do less, you know, for a
senator ! Well ?

Luc. At least, you'll say we did well in electing Quintus
Petilius, Caius Duellius, and Spurius Oppius—men of our
order !—sound men !—known sticklers for the people.—At
least you'll say we did well in that !

Den. And who dares say otherwise? "Well!" one might as well say "ill" as "well." "Well" is the very skirt of commendation; next neighbour to that mire and gutter, "ill." "Well" indeed! you acted like yourselves. Nay, e'en yourselves could not have acted better. Why, had you not elected them, Appius would have gone without his left hand, and each of his two feet!

Ser. Out! you are dishonest!

Den. Ha!

Ser. What would content you?

Den. A post in a hot battle. Out, you cur! Do you talk to me?

Citizen (from behind). Down with him, he does nothing but insult the people.

[*The crowd approach DENTATUS, threateningly.*

Icil. [*Entering.*] Stand back! Who is't that says down with Siccus Dentatus? Down with him! 'Tis what the enemy could never do; and shall we do it for them? Who uttered that dishonest word? Who uttered it, I say? Let him answer a fitter, though less worthy, mate—Lucius Icilius.

Citizen. Stand back, and hear Icilius.

Icil. What! haven't I voted for the decemvirs, and do I snarl at his jests? Has he not a right to jest? the good, honest Siccus Dentatus, that, alone, at the head of the veterans, vanquished the Æqui for you. Has he not a right to jest? For shame!—Get to your houses! The worthy Dentatus! Cheer for him, if you are Romans! Cheer for him before you go! Cheer for him, I say! [*Citizens go out, shouting.*

Den. And now, what thanks do you expect from me, Icilius?

Icil. None.

Den. By Jupiter, young man, had you thus stepped before me in the heat of battle, I should have cloven you down—but I'm obliged to you, Icilius—and hark you! There's a piece of furniture in the house of a friend of mine, that's called Virginus, I think you've set your heart upon—dainty enough; yet not amiss for a young man to covet. Ne'er lose your hopes! He may be brought into the mind to part with it. As to these curs, I question which I value less, their fawnings or their snarlings. I thank you, boy! Do you walk this way? I am glad of it. Come! 'Tis a noble decemvirate you have chosen for us! Come! [*They go out.*

SCENE II.—*Virginus's House.*

Enter VIRGINIUS and SERVIA.

Virginus. And is this all you have observed? I think There's nothing strange in that. An L and an I Twined with a V. Three very innocent letters To have bred such mischief in thy brain, good Servia. Come, read this riddle to me.

Servia. You may laugh,
 Virginius; but I'll read the riddle right.
 The L doth stand for Lucius; and the I,
 Icilius; which, I take it, will compose,
 "Lucius Icilius."

Virginius. So it will, good *Servia*.

Servia. Then, for the V; why, that is plain, "*Virginia*."

Virginius. And now, what conjuration find you here?

Servia. What should I find, but love? The maid's in love;
 In love, and it is with Icilius. Look, the wreath
 Is made of roses, that entwines the letters.

Virginius. And this is all?

Servia. And is it not enough?

You'll find this figuring where'er you look:
 There's not a piece of dainty work she does—
 Embroidery, or painting—not a task
 She finishes, but on the skirt, or border,
 In needle-work, or pencil, this, her secret,
 The silly wench betrays.

Virginius. Go, send her to me—

Stay! Have you spoken to her of it?

Servia. I!

Not I, indeed; I left that task to you—
 Though once I ask'd her what the letters meant.
 She laugh'd, and drew a scratch across them; but
 Had scarce done so, ere her fair visage fell,
 For grief that she had spoil'd the ciphers—and
 A sigh came out, and then almost a tear;
 And then she look'd as piteous on the harm
 That she had done, as she had done it to
 A thing had sense to feel it. Never after
 She let me note her at her work again.
 She had good reason!

Virginius. Send her to me, *Servia*. [SERVIA goes out.

There's something here, that promises to bring me
 Anticipation of my wish. I think
 Icilius loves my daughter—nay, I know it;
 And such a man would challenge for her husband;—
 And only waited, till her forward spring
 Put on, a little more, the genial likeness
 Of colouring into summer, ere I sought
 To nurse a flower, which, blossoming too early,
 Too early often dies; but if it springs
 Spontaneous, and, unlook'd for, woos our hand
 To tend and cherish it, the growth is healthful;
 And 'twere untimely, as unkind, to check it.
 I'll ascertain it shortly—soft, she comes.

Enter VIRGINIA.

Virginia. Well, father, what's your will?

Virginius. I wish'd to see you,
 To ask you of your tasks—how they go on—

And what your masters say of you—what last
You did. I hope you never play
The truant?

Virginia. The truant! No, indeed, Virginius.

Virginius. I am sure you do not—kiss me!

Virginia. O my father!

I am so happy when you're kind to me!

Virginius. You are so happy when I'm kind to you!

Am I not always kind? I never spoke

An angry word to you in all my life,

Virginia! You are happy when I'm kind!

That's strange; and makes me think you have some reason

To fear I may be otherwise than kind—

Is't so, my girl?

Virginia. Indeed, I did not know

What I was saying to you!

Virginius. Why, that's worse

And worse! What! when you said your father's kindness

Made you so happy, am I to believe

You were not thinking of him?

Virginia. I—

[Greatly confused.]

Virginius. Go fetch me

The latest task you did.

[VIRGINIA goes out.]

It is enough.

Her artless speech, like crystal, shows the thing

'Twould hide, but only covers. 'Tis enough!

She loves, and fears her father may condemn!

Virginia. [Re-entering with a painting.] Here, Sir.

Virginius. What's this?

Virginia. 'Tis Homer's story, father,

Of brave Achilles parting from Briseis.

Virginius. You have done it well. The colouring is good,

The figures well design'd. 'Tis very well!—

Whose face is this you've given to Achilles?

Virginia. Whose face?

Virginius. I've seen this face! Tut! tut! I know it

As well as I do my own, yet can't bethink me

Whose face it is!

Virginia. You mean Achilles' face?

Virginius. Did I not say so! 'Tis the very face

Of—No! no! Not of him. There's too much youth

And comeliness, and too much fire, to suit

The face of Siccus Dentatus.

Virginia. Oh!

You surely never took it for his face!

Virginius. Why, no; for now I look again, I'd swear

You lost the copy, ere you drew the head;

And, to requite Achilles for the want

Of his own face, contrived to borrow one

From Lucius Icilius. [Enter DENTATUS.] My Dentatus,

I am glad to see you!

Den. 'Tis not for my news, then.

Virginus. Your news! What news?

Den. More violence and wrong from these new masters of ours—our noble decemvirs—these demi-gods of the good people of Rome! No man's property is safe from them. Nay, it appears we hold our wives and daughters but by the tenure of their will. Their liking is the law. The senators themselves, scared at their audacious rule, withdraw themselves to their villas, and leave us to our fate. There are rumours, also, of new incursions by the Sabines.

Virginus. Rome never saw such days!

Den. And she'll see worse, unless I fail in my reckoning. Is that Virginia? I saw her not before. How does the fair Virginia? Why, she is quite a woman. I was just now wishing for a daughter.

Virginus. A plague, you mean.

Den. I am sure you should not say so.

Virginus. Indeed he should not; and he does not say so, Dentatus—not that I am not a plague, But that he does not think me one, for all I do to weary him. I am sure, Dentatus, If to be thought to do well is to do well, There's nothing I do ill; but it is far From that! for few things do I as I ought— Yet everything is well done with my father, Dentatus.

Virginus. That's well done, is it not, my friend? [*Aside.* But if you had a daughter, what would you do with her?

Den. I'd give her to Icilius. I should have been just now torn to pieces, but for his good offices. The gentle citizens—that are driven about by the decemvirs' lictors, like a herd of tame oxen, and, with most beast-like docility, only low applauses to them in return—would have done me the kindness to knock my brains out; but the noble Icilius bearded them singly, and railed them into temper. Had I a daughter worthy of such a husband, he should have such a wife, and a patrician's dower along with her.

Virginus. I wish to speak with you, Dentatus. Icilius is a young man, whom I honour; but so far only as his conduct gives me warrant. He has had, as thou knowest, a principal hand in helping us to our decemvirs. It may be that he is what I would gladly think him; but I must see him clearly, clearly, Dentatus. If he has acted with the remotest understanding, touching the views of these new tyrants, that we are cursed withal, I disclaim him as my friend! I cast him off for ever!

[*VIRGINIUS and DENTATUS go out.*]

Virginus. How is it with my heart? I feel as one That has lost everything, and just before Had nothing left to wish for! He will cast Icilius off!—I never told it yet; But take of me, thou gentle air, the secret— And ever after breathe more balmy sweet— I love Icilius! Yes, although to thee

I fear to tell it, that hast neither eye
 To scan my looks, nor voice to echo me,
 Nor e'en an o'er-apt ear to catch my words;
 Yet, sweet invisible confidant, my secret
 Once being thine—I tell thee, and I'll tell thee
 Again—and yet again. I love Icilius!
 He'll cast Icilius off!—not if Icilius
 Approve his honour. That he's sure to do;
 He speaks, and looks, and moves a thing of honour,
 Or honour never yet spoke, look'd, or moved,
 Or was a thing of earth! O come, Icilius!
 Do but appear, and thou art vindicated.

ICILIUS, entering.

Virginia! sweet Virginia! Sure I heard
 My name pronounced. Was it by thee, Virginia?
 Thou dost not answer! Then it *was* by thee—
 O! wouldst thou tell me why thou namedst Icilius!

Virginia. My father is incensed with thee. Dentatus
 Has told him of the new decemvirate,
 How they abuse their office. You, he knows,
 Have favour'd their election, and he fears
 May have some understanding of their plans.

Icil. He wrongs me then!

Virginia. I thank the gods!

Icil. For me!

Virginia? Do you thank the gods for me?
 Your eye is moist—yet that may be for pity.
 Your hand doth tremble—that may be for fear;
 Your cheek is cover'd o'er with blushes! What,
 O what can that be for?

Virginia. Icilius, leave me!

Icil. Leave thee, Virginia! O, a word—a word
 Trembles upon my tongue, which, if it match
 The thought that moves thee, now, and thou wilt let me
 Pronounce that word, to speak that thought for thee,
 I'll breathe, though I expire in the ecstasy
 Of uttering it.

Virginia. Icilius, will you leave me?

Icil. Love! Love! Virginia! Love!—If I have spoken
 Thy thought aright, ne'er be it said again,
 The heart requires more service than the tongue
 Can, at its best, perform. My tongue hath served
 Two hearts—but lest it should o'erboast itself,
 Two hearts with but one thought! Virginia!
 Virginia, speak! [*VIRGINIA covers her face with her hands.*]

O, I have loved thee long;

So much the more ecstatic my delight,
 To find thee mine at length.

Virginia. My secret's yours.
 Keep it and honour it, Icilius.

Enter VIRGINIUS and DENTATUS behind.

Virgilius. Icilius here!

Virginia. I ask thee now to leave me!

Icil. Leave thee! who leaves a treasure he has coveted
So long, and found so newly, ere he scans it
Again, and yet again; and asks and answers,
Repeats and answers, answers and repeats,
The half-mistrustful half-assured question—
And is it mine, indeed?

Virginia. Indeed! indeed!
Now leave me!

Icil. I must see thy father first,
And lay my soul before him.

Virginia. Not to-night!

Icil. Now worse than ever, dear Virginia!
Can I endure his doubts; I'll lay my soul
Naked before him—win his friendship quite,
Or lose myself for ever. [*Going, is met by VIRGINIUS.*]

Virgilius. Stop, Icilius!
Thou seest that hand? It is a Roman's, boy;
'Tis sworn to liberty—It is the friend
Of honour. Dost thou think so?

Icil. Do I think Virgilius owns that hand!

Virgilius. Then you'll believe
It has an oath deadly to tyranny,
And is the foe of falsehood! By the gods,
Knew it the lurking-place of treason, though
It were a brother's heart, 'twould drag the caittiff
Forth. Darest thou take that hand?

Icil. I dare, Virgilius.

Virgilius. Then take it! Is it weak in thy embrace?
Returns it not thy gripe? Thou wilt not hold
Faster by it than it will hold by thee!
I overheard thee say, thou wast resolved
To win my friendship quite—Thou canst not win
What's thine already! You will stay, my boy,
And sup with us to-night?

Den. To be sure he will!

Virgilius. And, hark you, Sir,
At your convenient time, appoint a day
Your friends and kinsmen may confer with me—
There is a bargain I would strike with you.
Come, to the supper-room. Do you wait for me
To lead Virginia in, or will you do it?
Come on, I say; come on. Your hand, Dentatus.

[*They go out.*]

† ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Street.*

Enter PUBLIUS and SEXTUS.

Pub. This way! We muster at the Flaminian gate.

Sext. Shall we not wait for Decius?

Pub. No; were he ten times Decius.—They'll have already begun their march. Come on!

Enter NUMITORIUS.

Num. Do you belong to the fourth legion?

Pub. We do.

Num. They are upon their march, then?

Pub. I told you so—Come on! come on! [*Soldiers go out.*]

Enter LUCIUS.

Luc. Numitorius, what soldiers were those that just now parted from you?

Num. Soldiers hastening to overtake the army, that's now upon its march.

Luc. 'Tis all confirmed, then; the Sabines are in force upon our borders.

Num. I pray you tell me something new! Know you not that the senate has met, and that the decemvirs have come off triumphant, in spite of all opposition?

Luc. Should they have been opposed in such a strait as this?

Num. Ay, should they! They dared not have armed a single citizen without the order of the senate; which, had they not obtained, the country would have been left naked to the foe; and, then, they had been forced to make room for more popular magistrates.

Luc. Why were they not opposed, then?

Num. Did not I tell you they *were* opposed? Caius Claudius, Appius's own uncle, and Honorius, that noble senator, opposed them; and it was like to go against them, but for the brawling insolence of Spurius Oppius, and the effrontery of the head decemvir, backed by the young patricians.

Luc. So they are empowered to take up arms?

Num. To be sure they are; and they have done so. One body has already marched, and by this time, no doubt, has come to blows with the enemy. The levy is still proceeding. All the decemvirs, but Appius, take the field. He remains in Rome to keep good order, that is the violator of all order. Why, where have you been, Lucius, to have felt no movement of so great and wide a stir? Your brother meets Virginius at his house to-day. Come with me thither, for you I know are bid. Lucius, there's no huzzaing for your decemvirs now. Come on! 'Tis close upon the hour. [*They go out.*]

SCENE II.—*Virginus's House.*

Enter VIRGINIUS, ICILIUS, NUMITORIUS, LUCIUS, and others.

Virginus. Welcome, Icilius! Welcome, friends! Icilius, I hoped to speak with you, to-day, of feasting And merriment, but war is now the word; One that unlovingly keeps time with mirth, Unless war's own—when the fierce fight is won, And, safe carousing, comrades drink to victory!

Icil. Virginus! have you changed your mind?

Virginus. My mind?

What mind? How now! Are you that boy, Icilius, You set your heart so earnestly upon A dish of poor confections, that to balk you Makes you look blank! I did design to feast you Together with your friends. The times are changed— The march, the tent, the fight becomes us now!

Icil. Virginus!

Virginus. Well!

Icil. Virginus!

Virginus. How the boy Reiterates my name!

Icil. There's not a hope

I have but is the client of Virginus!

Virginus. Well, well! I only meant to put it off! We'll have the revel yet! the board shall smoke! The cup shall sparkle, and the jest shall soar And mock us from the roof! Will that content you? Not till the war be done, though—Yet, ere then, Some tongue, that now needs only wag to make The table ring, may have a tale to tell So petrifying, that it cannot utter it! I'll make all sure, that you may be my guest At any rate—although you should be forced To play the host for me and feast yourself. Look here, [*shows a parchment to ICILIUS*] How think you?—Will it meet the charge? Will it not do? We want a witness, though! I'll bring one; of whom if you approve, I'll sign The bond. I'll wait upon you instantly.

[*Goes out.*]

Luc. How feel you now, Icilius?

Icil. Like a man

Whom the next moment makes or quite unmakes. With the intensity of exquisite Suspense, my breathing thickens, and my heart Beats heavily, and with remittent throb, As like to lose its action—See! my hope Is bless'd! I live! I live!

Enter VIRGINIUS, conducting VIRGINIA, with NUMITORIUS.

Virginus. You are my witnesses, That this young creature I present to you,

I boast of, as my profitably cherish'd,
 And most deservedly beloved child;
 My daughter truly filial—both in word
 And act—yet even more in act than word;
 And—for the man who hopes to win her hand—
 A virgin, from whose lips a soul as pure
 Exhales, as e'er responded to the blessing
 Breathed in a parent's kiss. [*Kissing her.*] Icilius!
 [*ICILIUS rushes towards VIRGINIUS, and kneels.* Since

You are upon your knee, young man, look up;
 And lift your hand to heaven—You will be all
 Her father has been—added unto all
 A lover would be!

Icil. All that man should be
 To woman, I will be to her!

Virginus. The oath
 Is register'd! Didst thou but know, young man,
 How fondly I have watch'd her, since the day
 Her mother died, and left me to a charge
 Of double duty bound—how she hath been
 My ponder'd thought by day, my dream by night,
 My prayer, my vow, my offering, my praise,
 My sweet companion, pupil, tutor, child!—
 Thou wouldst not wonder that my drowning eye,
 And choking utterance, upbraids my tongue
 That tells thee, she is thine!—Icilius,
 I now betroth her to thee! When the war
 Is done—you shall espouse her. Friends, a word!
 [*VIRGINIUS and the rest retire.*

Icil. Virginia! my Virginia! I am all
 Dissolved—o'erpower'd with the munificence
 Of this auspicious hour—and thou, nor movest—
 Nor look'st—nor speak'st—to bless me with a sign
 Of sweet according joy!—I love thee, but
 To make thee happy! If to make thee so
 Be bliss denied to me—lo, I release
 The gifted hand—that I would faster hold,
 Than wretches, bound for death, would cling to life.
 If thou wouldst take it back—then take it back.

Virginus. I take it back—to give it thee again!

Icil. O help me to a word to speak my bliss,
 Or I am beggar'd—No! There's no such word!
 There cannot be; for never man had bliss
 Like mine to name!

Virginus. Thou dost but beggar me,
 Icilius, when thou makest thyself a bankrupt;
 Placing a value on me far above
 My real little worth.—I'd help thee to
 A hundred words; each one of which would far
 O'er-rate thy gain, and yet no single one
 Rate over high!

Icil. Thou couldst not do it! No;
 Thou couldst not do it! Every term of worth
 Writ down and doubled, then the whole summ'd up,
 Would leave with thee a rich remainder still!—
 Pick from each rarer pattern of thy sex
 Her rarest charm, till thou hast every charm
 Of soul and body that can blend in woman,
 I would out-paragon the paragon
 With thee!

Virginia. And if thou wouldst, I'd find thee, for
 Thy paragon, a mate—if that can be
 A mate which beats the thing 'tis ta'en to match—
 One that would make thy paragon look poor—
 And I would call that so o'ermatching mate
 "Icilius."

Icil. No! I will not let thee win
 On such a theme as this!

Virginia. Nor will I drop
 The controversy, that the richer makes me
 The more I lose!

Icil. My sweet Virginia,
 We do but lose and lose, and win and win;
 Playing for nothing but to lose and win.
 Then let us drop the game—and thus I stop it. [*Kisses her.*]

Re-enter VIRGINIUS, and the others.

Virgilius. Witness, my friends, that seal! Observe, it is
 A living one! It is Icilius' seal;
 And stamp'd upon as true and fair a bond—
 Though it receive the impress blushing—
 As ever signet kiss'd! Are all content?
 Speak else! She is thy free affianced wife,
 Thou art her free affianced husband! Come,
 We have o'erdrawn our time—Farewell, Virginia;
 Thy future husband for a time must be
 Bellona's. To thy tasks, again, my child;
 Be thou the bride of study for a time.
 Farewell!

Virginia. My father!

Virgilius. May the gods protect thee!

Virginia. My father!

Virgilius. Does the blood forsake thy cheek?
 Come to my arms once more! Remember, girl,
 The first and foremost debt a Roman owes
 Is to his country; and it must be paid,
 If need be, with his life.—Why, how you hold me!
 Icilius, take her from me! Servia!
 Come, boy.

Icil. Farewell, Virginia!

Virgilius. [*To SERVIA.*] Take her in!

Virginia. The gods be with thee, my Icilius! Father,
 The gods be with thee—and Icilius.

Virginus. Come! I swear a battle might be fought and won
In half the time! Now, once for all, farewell!
Your sword and buckler, boy! The foe! the foe!
Does he not tread on Roman ground! Come on!
Come on!—Charge on him!—Drive him back, or die!

[*They go out.*]

SCENE III.—*Appius's House.*

Enter APPIUS.

It was a triumph, the achieving which
O'erpaid the hazard that we ran—though great.
They have made trial of their strength, and learn'd
Its value from defeat. The senate knows
Its masters now; and the decemvirate,
To make its reign eternal, only needs
Its own decree. Ere this the saucy foe
Has met the chastisement he merited;
Which turns his bold assault to shameful flight,
Leaving us, henceforth, leisure to enjoy
The boundless harvest of our glorious daring!
Tyranny thrives in Rome! O Tyranny!
How godlike is thy port! Thou givest and takest,
And ask'st no other leave, than what thy own
Imperial will accords. Jove does no more!
Now, Claudius—

Enter CLAUDIUS.

Claud. We have suffer'd a defeat!

App. What! The decemvirs fly!

Claud. The soldiers fight

With only half a heart. The other half
Looks on, and cares not which side proves the winner.

App. Then decimate them. Traitors! Recreants!
Why, we shall have them at our very doors!
Have we lost ground, my Claudius?

Claud. None, except
What we've retraced in fame. We strove to teach
The enemy their road lay backwards, but
They would not turn their faces for us. Each
Retains his former line.

Enter MARCUS.

App. What news?

Mar. The Æqui

Still press upon us. Rumours are afloat
Of new disasters, which the common cry,
Be sure, still multiplies and swells. Dentatus,
That over-busy, crabbéd veteran,
Walks up and down among the people, making
Your plans his theme of laughter. Nought he stints

That may reflect you in an odious light,
And lower the decemvirate.

App. A dungeon
Would do good service to him! Once within,
Strangling were easy! We must stop his mouth—
Unwholesome food—or liquor—Where was he
When last you heard him?

Marc. In the Forum.

App. So!

He is past service, is he not? Some way
To clear the city of him. Come, we'll hear him,
And answer him, and silence him! 'Tis well
The dog barks forth his spleen! It puts us on
Our guard against his bite. Come to the Forum!

[*They go out.*]

SCENE IV.—*The Forum.*

Enter DENTATUS, with TITUS, SERVIUS, and Citizens.

Tit. What's to be done?

Den. We'll be undone—that's to be done.

Ser. We'll do away with the decemvirate.

Den. You'll do away with the decemvirate?—The decemvirate will do away with you! You'll do away with yourselves! Do nothing!—The enemy will do away with both of you. In another month a Roman will be a stranger in Rome. A fine pass we are come to, masters!

Tit. But something must be done.

Den. Why, what would you have? You shout and clap your hands, as if it were a victory you heard of; and yet you cry—Something must be done! Truly, I know not what that something is, unless it be to make you General. How say you, masters?

Ser. We'd follow any man that knew how to lead us, and would rid us of our foes, and the decemvirate together.

Den. You made these decemvirs!—You are strangely discontented with your own work! And you are over-cunning workmen, too—You put your materials so firmly together, there's no such thing as taking them asunder! What you build, you build—except it be for your own good.—There you are bunglers at your craft. Ha! ha! ha! I cannot but laugh to think how you toiled; and strained, and sweated, to rear the stones of the building one above another, when I see the ugly faces you make at it!

Tit. But tell us the news again.

Den. Is it so good? Does it so please you? Then prick your ears again, and listen. We have been beaten again—beaten back on our own soil. Rome has seen its haughty masters fly before chastisement, like slaves—returning cries for blows—and all this of your decemvirs, gentlemen!

1st Cit. Huzza for it again!

[*The people shout.*]

2nd Cit. Hush! Appius comes.

Den. And do you care for that? You that were, just now, within a stride of taking him and his colleagues by the throat? You'll do away with the decemvirs, will you!—and let but one of them appear, you dare not for your life but keep your spleen within your teeth! Listen to me, now! I'll speak the more for Appius—[*Enter APPIUS, CLAUDIUS, and MARCUS, preceded by Lictors.*—I say, to the eternal infamy of Rome, the foe has chased her sons, like hares, on their own soil, where they should prey like lions—and so they would, had they not keepers to tame them.

App. What's that you are saying to the people, Siccus Dentatus?

Den. I am regaling them with the news.

App. The news?

Den. Ay, the news—the newest that can be had; and the more novel because unlooked for. Who ever thought to see the eagle in the talons of the kite?

App. It is not well done in you, Dentatus, to chafe a sore. It makes it rankle. If your surgery has learned no better, it should keep its hands to itself! You have very little to do, to busy yourself after this fashion.

Den. I busy myself as I like, Appius Claudius.

App. I know you do, when you labour to spread disaffection among the people, and bring the decemvirs into contempt.

Den. The decemvirs bring themselves into contempt.

App. Ha! dare you say so?

Den. Dare! I have dared cry "Come on!" to a cohort of bearded warriors—Is it thy smooth face should appal me? Dare!—It never yet flurried me to use my arm—Shall I not, think you, be at my ease when I but wag my tongue? Dare, indeed!

App. Your grey hairs should keep company with honester speech!

Den. Shall I show you, Appius, the company they are wont to keep? Look here! and here [*uncovering his forehead and showing scars*]. These are the vouchers of honest deeds—Such is the speech with which my grey hairs keep company. I tell you, to your teeth, the decemvirs bring themselves into contempt.

App. What, are they not serving their country at the head of her armies?

Den. They'd serve her better in the body of her armies! I'd name for thee a hundred centurions would make better generals! A common soldier of a year's active service would take his measures better! Generals! Our generals were wont to teach us how to win battles.—Tactics are changed; your generals instruct us how to lose them.

App. Do you see my lictors?

Den. There are twelve of them.

App. What if I bid them seize thee?

Den. They'd blush to do it.

App. Why now, Dentatus, I begin to know you ;
I fancied you a man that loved to vent
His causeless anger in an under-breath,
And speak it in the ear—and only then
When there was safety ! Such a one, you'll own,
Is dangerous ; and to be trusted, as
A friend or foe, unworthy. But I see
You rail to faces ! Have you not so much
Respect for Appius as to take him by
The hand, when he confesses you have some
Pretence to quarrel with his colleagues' plans,
And find fault with himself ?—which yet, you'll own,
May quite as well be kindly done, Dentatus,
As harshly. Had you only to myself
Declared your discontents, the more you had rail'd,
The more I should have thank'd you.

Den. Had I thought—

App. And have you been campaigning, then, so long,
And prosperously—and mistrust you, Siccus,
That a young scarless soldier, like myself,
Would listen to your tutoring ? See, now,
How much you have mistaken me ! Dentatus,
In a word—Can you assist the generals,
And will you ?

Den. I have all the will—but as
For the ability—

App. Tut ! tut ! Dentatus,
You vex me now. This coyness sits not well on you !
You know as well as I, you have as much
Ability as will. I would not think you
A man that loved to find fault, but to find it !
Surely the evil you complain of, you
Would lend a hand to remedy ! See, now,
'Tis fairly put to you—what say you ?

Den. Appius,
You may use me as you please.

App. And that will be,
As you deserve. I'll send you, as my legate,
To the army. [*Shouts from the people.*] Do you hear your
friends, Dentatus ?

A lucky omen, that ! Away ! away !
Apprise your house—Prepare for setting out.
I'll hurry your credentials. Minutes now
Rate high as hours ! Assist my colleagues with
Your counsel ; if their plans displease you, why
Correct them—change them—utterly reject them.
And if you meet obstruction, notice me,
And I will push it by. There, now ! Your hand !
Again ! Away ! All the success attend you
That Appius wishes you !

Den. Success is from

The gods, whose hand soe'er it pleases them
To send it by. I know not what success
'Tis Appius' wish they send; but this I know
I am a soldier; and, as a soldier, I
Am bound to serve. All the success I ask,

Is that which benefits my country, Appius. *[DENTATUS goes out.]*

App. You've served her over long! *[Aside.]* Now for our
causes. *[APPIUS ascends the tribunal.]*

Claud. *[To MARCUS.]* Do you see the drift of this?

Marc. I cannot guess it.

Claud. Nor I.

App. *[To a Plebeian.]* Are you the suitor in this cause?
Speak!

Plebeian. Noble Appius, if there's law in Rome,
To right a man most injured, to that law
Against yon proud patrician I appeal.

App. No more of that, I say! Because he's rich
And great, you call him proud! 'Tis not unlike
Because you're poor and mean, you call yourself
Injured. Relate your story; and, so please you,
Spare epithets.

Plebeian. Grant me a minute's pause,
And I'll begin.

*[VIRGINIA at this moment crosses the stage with her
Nurse, and is met by NUMITORIUS, who holds her in
conversation: APPIUS rivets his eyes upon her.]*

Num. You have heard the news?

Virginia. What news, dear uncle?

Num. Step

Aside with me, I'll tell you.

[Takes her a little farther from the tribunal.]

App. Can it be
A mortal that I look upon?

Virginia. They are safe!
I thank the gods!

App. Her eyes look up to heaven
Like something kindred to it—rather made
To send their glances down, and fill the earth
With worship and with gratulation. What
A thrill runs up and down my veins, and all
Throughout me!

Plebeian. Now, most noble Appius—

App. Stop!
Put off the cause; I cannot hear it, now.
Attend to-morrow. An oppressive closeness
Allows me not to breathe. Lictors! make clear
The ground about the rostrum!

[Descends, and approaches CLAUDIUS with precipitation.]
Claudius! *Claudius!*

Marcus, go you and summon my physician
To be at home before me.

[MARCUS goes out.]

Claudius, look!

Virginia. You send a messenger to-night ?

Num. I do.

App. Paint me that smile ! I never saw a smile
Till now. My Claudius, is she not a wonder ?
I know not whether in the state of girlhood
Or womanhood to call her. 'Twixt the two
She stands, as that were loath to lose her, this
To win her most impatient. The young year
Trembling and blushing 'twixt the striving kisses
Of parting spring and meeting summer, seems
Her only parallel !

Num. 'Tis well ! I'll send
Your father word of this. But have you not
A message to Icilius ?

App. Mark you, Claudius ?

There is a blush ! I must possess her.

Virginia. Tell him,
I think upon him. Farewell, Numitorius !

[*Goes out with SERVIA.*]

Num. Farewell, Virginia.

Claud. Master, will you tell me
The name of that young maiden ?

Num. She is call'd
Virginia, daughter of Virginius ;
A Roman citizen, and a centurion
Now with the army.

Claud. She is very like
The daughter of a friend of mine. Farewell.

[*NUMITORIUS goes out.*]

App. I burn, my Claudius ! brain and heart—there's not
A fibre in my body but's on fire !

With what a gait she moves ! Such was not Hebe,
Or Jupiter had sooner lost his heaven,
Than changed his cupbearer ! A step like that
The rapture-glowing clouds might well bear up,
And never take for human ! Find me, Claudius,
Some way to compass the possession of her !

Claud. 'Tis difficult—her father's of repute ;
The highest of his class.

App. I guess'd it ! Friends
Are ever friends, except when they are needed.

Claud. Nay, Appius !

App. If thou canst not give me hope,
Be dumb !

Claud. A female agent may be used
With some success.

App. How ? How ?

Claud. To tamper with
That woman who attends her.

App. Set about it.

Claud. Could she but be induced to help you to
A single meeting with her——

App. Claudius! Claudius!
Effect but that!

Claud. I'll instantly about it.

App. Spare not my gold—nor stop at promises.
I will fulfil them fast as thou canst make them.
To purchase such a draught of ecstasy
I'd drain a kingdom—Set about it, Claudius!
Away! I will not eat, nor drink, nor sleep,
Until I hear from thee!

Claud. Depend upon me!

App. I do, my Claudius, for my life—my life!

[*They go out severally.*]

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Appius's House.*

APPIUS [*entering*].

It is not love, if what I've felt before
And call'd by such a name be love—a thing
That took its turn—that I could entertain,
Put off, or humour. 'Tis some other thing;
Or if the same, why in some other state—
Or I am not the same—or it hath found
Some other part of sensibility
More quick, whereon to try its power, and there
Expend it all! Now, Claudius, your success?

Enter CLAUDIUS.

Claud. Nothing would do, yet nothing left undone!
She was not to be purchased.

App. Did she guess—

Claud. She could not.

So guarded was my agent; who described you
A man of power, of noble family,
And regal fortune—one that ask'd not what
His pleasures cost—no further made disclosure.

App. And did it nothing move her, Claudius?

Claud. Nothing.

The more my agent urged, the more she shrunk
And wither'd hag grew callous. Further press'd
And with more urgent importuning; ire
And scorn, in imprecations and invectives,
Vented upon the monster—as she call'd him—

That would pollute her child, compell'd my advocate
To drop the suit she saw was hopeless.

App. Now

Had I a friend indeed!

Claud. Has Appius need

To search for such a friend, and Claudius by him?

App. Friends ever are provisionally friends—

Friends for so far—friends just to such a point,
And then “farewell!”—friends with an understanding—

As “should the road be pretty safe”—“the sea
Not over-rough,” and so on—friends of *ifs*

And *buts*—no friends! O could I find the man
Would be a simple thorough-going friend!

Claud. I thought you had one, Appius.

App. So thought Appius,

Till Appius thought upon a test of friendship,
He fears he would not render to himself,
Could he be Appius' friend.

Claud. Then Appius has

A truer friend than Appius is to Appius.
I'll give that test!

App. What! you'd remove her father
And that Icilius whom you told me of?

Claud. Count it a thing already done.

App. My Claudius!

Can I believe it? Art thou such a friend,
That, when I look'd for thee to stop and leave me,
I find thee, keeping with me, step by step;
And even in thy loving eagerness
Outstriding me?—I do not want thee, Claudius,
To soil thy hand with their plebeian blood.

Claud. What wouldst thou, then?

App. I was left guardian to thee——

Claud. Thou wast.

App. Among the various property
Thy father left were many female slaves.

Claud. Well?

App. It were easy for thee, were it not,
To invent a tale that one of them confess'd
She had sold a female infant (and, of course,
Thy slave) unto Virginius' wife, who pass'd it
Upon Virginius as his daughter, which
Supposititious offspring is this same
Virginia.

Claud. I conceive you.

App. To induce

Your agent to confirm your tale would cost
But small persuasion. Is it done?

Claud. This hour!

I'll find the school, my Appius, where Virginia
Pursues her studies. Thither I'll repair,
And seize her as my slave, at once. Do thou

Repair to thy tribunal, whither, should
Her friends molest me in the attempt, I'll bring her,
And plead my cause before thee.

App. Claudius! Claudius!
How shall I pay thee? O, thou noble friend!
Power, fortune, life, whate'er belongs to Appius,
Reckon as thine! Away, away, my Claudius!

[They go out severally.]

SCENE II.—*A Street in Rome.*

Enter LUCIUS, meeting TITUS, SERVIUS, and CNEIUS.

Luc. Well, masters, any news of Siccus Dentatus from the camp, how he was received by the decemvirs?

Tit. He was received well by the decemvirs.

Cne. It wasn't then for the love they bear him.

Tit. But they expect he'll help them to return the cuffs they have gotten from the enemy.

Ser. Do you wish for a victory?

Luc. Yes, if Dentatus wins it. 'Tis to our credit, masters—He's one of us.

Ser. And is not Spurius Oppius one of us?

Luc. He is; but he's in league with the patricians—that is, the patrician decemvirs. He is but half a plebeian, and that is the worst half. The better half he threw away when he became half a patrician. I never liked your half-and-half gentry; they generally combine the bad of both kinds, without the good of either.

Ser. Well, we shall have news presently. Your brother, Icilius, has just arrived with despatches from the camp. I met him passing through the Forum, and asked him what news he brought. He answered, none; but added, we might look for news of another kind than what we had been lately accustomed to hear.

[A shriek without.]

Cne. What's that!

Tit. Look yonder, masters! See!

Ser. 'Tis Appius's client dragging a young woman along with him.

Tit. Let us stand by each other, masters, and prevent him.

Enter CLAUDIUS, dragging along VIRGINIA, followed by SERVIA and others.

Servia. Help! help! help!

Luc. Let go your hold!

Claud. Stand by!

She is my slave!

Servia. His slave? Help! help! His slave?—
He looks more like a slave than she! Good masters!
Protect the daughter of Virginius!

Luc. Release the maid.

Tit. Forbear this violence.

Claud. I call for the assistance of the laws ;
She is my slave.

Servia. She is my daughter, masters,
My foster-daughter ; and her mother was
A free-born woman—and her father is
A citizen !—a Roman !—good Virginius,
As I said before—Virginius, the centurion,
Whom all of you must know.—Help ! help ! I say.
You see she cannot speak to help herself ;
Speak for her, masters—help her, if you're men !

Tit. Let go your hold !

Claud. Obstruct me at your peril !

Luc. We'll make you, if you will not !

Claud. Let me pass !

Ser. Let go your hold, once more !

Claud. Good masters ! patience—

Hear me, I say—She is my slave—I wish not
To use this violence, my friends ; but may not
A master seize upon his slave ?—Make way,
Or such of you as are dissatisfied,
Repair with me to the decemvir.—Come,
I only want my right !

Tit. Come on, then !

Ser. Ay,

To the decemvir !

Servia. Run, run for Numitorius !—Alarm our neighbours !
—Call out Icilius' friends !—I shall go mad ! Help ! help !
help ! [*They go out.*]

SCENE III.—*The Forum.*

Enter APPIUS, *preceded by* Lictors.

App. Will he succeed ?—Will he attempt it ?—Will he
Go through with it ?—[*Looking out*]—No sign—I almost wish
He had not undertaken it ; yet wish,
More than I wish for life, he may accomplish
What he has undertaken. O ! the pause
That precedes action ! It is vacancy
That o'erweighs action's substance. What I fear
Most is the hour. My blind impatience saw not
'Twas day ! Her all-persuasive charms, alone
Will gather round her, from the passers-by
Troops to her succour !—What, then, with the aid
Of cries and tears, enforcing their appeal ? [*Listens.*]
'That sound brings feet in haste !—He brings her, but
Behemm'd with friends !—Now, play for love,
As boldly as for power ! I must prepare
For his reception.

[*APPIUS ascends the tribunal—CLAUDIUS enters, still
holding VIRGINIA, followed by SERVIA, Women,
and Citizens.*]

Claud. Do not press upon me ;
Here's the decemvir—he will satisfy you,
Whether a master has a right, or not,
To seize his slave whene'er he finds her.

Servia. Slave !

She is no slave. Thou liest to call her so !
She never was a slave ! Thou worse than slave !
To give her such a name—Ay ! threaten me !
She is a free-born maid, and not a slave,
Or never was a free-born maid in Rome !
O ! you shall dearly answer for it !

App. Peace !

What quarrel's this ? Speak, those who are aggrieved.

Enter NUMITORIUS.

Num. Where is Virginia—Wherefore do you hold
That maiden's hand ?

Claud. Who asks the question ?

Num. I !

Her uncle Numitorius !

Claud. Numitorius,
You think yourself her uncle—Numitorius,
No blood of yours flows in her veins, to give you
The title that you claim. Most noble Appius !
If you sit here for justice, as I hope
You do, attend not to the clamour of
This man, who calls himself this damsel's *uncle*.
She is my property—was born beneath
My father's roof, whose slave her mother was,
Who—as I can establish past dispute—
Sold her, an infant, to Virginius' wife,
Who never had a child, and heavily
Revolved her barrenness. My slave I have found
And seized—as who that finds his own (no matter
How long so ever miss'd) should fear to take it ?
If they oppose my claim, let them produce
Their counter-proofs, and bring the cause to trial !
But till they prove I know not what's mine own—
An undertaking somewhat perilous—
Mine own I shall retain—yet giving them,
Should they demand it, what security
They please for re-producing her.

App. Why that

Would seem but reasonable.

Num. Reasonable !

Claudius ! [*With much vehemence—recollects himself.*]

He's but a mask upon the face

Of some more powerful contriver. [*Aside.*] Appius,
My niece's father is from Rome, thou know'st,
Serving his country. Is it not unjust,
In the absence of a citizen, to suffer

His right to his own child to be disputed?
 Grant us a day to fetch Virginius,
 That he himself may answer this most foul
 And novel suit—Meanwhile, to me belongs
 The custody of the maid. Her uncle's house
 Can better answer for her honour than
 The house of Claudius. 'Tis the law of Rome,
 Before a final sentence, the defendant
 May not sustain in what he still possesses
 Disturbance from the plaintiff.

Tit. A just law.

Ser. And a most reasonable demand.

All the Citizens. Ay! Ay! Ay!

App. Silence, you citizens! Will you restrain
 Your tongues, and give your magistrate permission
 To speak? The law is just—most reasonable—
 I framed that law myself—I will maintain
 That law!

Tit. Most noble Appius!

Ser. A most just decree!

All the Citizens. Ay! Ay!

App. Will you be silent? Will you please to wait
 For my decree, you most untractable
 And boisterous citizens! Yes; I repeat,
 I framed that law myself, and will maintain it.
 But are you, Numitorius, here defendant?
 That title none but the reputed father
 Of the young woman has a right to—How
 Can I commit to thee what may appear
 The plaintiff's property; and, if not his,
 Still, is not thine? I'll give thee till to-morrow
 Ere I pass a final judgment—But the girl
 Remains with Claudius, who shall bind himself
 In such security as you require,
 To re-produce her at the claim of him
 Who calls her daughter—This is my decree.

Num. A foul decree.—Shame! Shame!

Ser. Ay, a most foul decree.

Cne. A villanous decree.

Ser. Most villanous.

Servia. Good citizens, what do you with our weapons,
 When you should use your own? Your hands!—your hands!
 He shall not take her from us!

Gather round her,

And if he touch her, be it to his cost!

And if ye see him touch her, never more

Expect from us your titles—never more

Be husbands, brothers, lovers, at our mouths,

Or anything that doth imply the name

Of men—except such men as *men* should blush for.

App. Command your wives and daughters, citizens,
 They quit the Forum!

Servia. They shall not command us,
That care not to protect us!

App. Take the girl,
If she is yours.

Claud. Stand by!

Virginia. O save me! save me!

Icil. [*entering*]. Virginia's voice!—Virginia! [*Rushes to her.*

Virginia. O, Icilius! [*Falls fainting in his arms.*

Icil. Take her, good Numitorius.

App. You had better
Withdraw, Icilius; the affair is judged.

Claud. I claim my slave.

Icil. Stand back, thou double slave!
Touch her, and I will tear thee limb from limb,
Before thy master's face.—She is my wife,
My life, my heart, my heart's blood.—Touch her
With but a look——

App. My lictors, there, advance!
See that Icilius quits the Forum.—Claudius,
Secure your slave.

Icil. Lictors, a moment pause
For your own sakes! Do not mistake these arms!
Think not the strength of any common man
Is that they feel! They serve a charmed frame,
The which a power pervades, that ten times trebles
The natural energy of each single nerve
To sweep you down as reeds.

App. Obey my orders!

Icil. Appius! before I quit the Forum, let me
Address a word to you.

App. Be brief, then!

Icil. Brief!
Is't not enough you have deprived us, Appius,
Of the two strongest bulwarks to our liberties,
Our tribunes and our privilege of appeal
To the assembly of the people? Cannot
The honour of the Roman maids be safe?
Know, then, this virgin is betroth'd to me,
Wife of my hope—Thou shalt not cross my hope
And I retain my life—Attempt it not!
I stand among my fellow-citizens—
His fellow-soldiers hem Virginius round,
Both men and gods are on our side! But grant
I stood alone, with nought but virtuous love
To hearten me—alone would I defeat
The execution of thy infamous
Decree! I'll quit the Forum now, but not
Alone!—My love! my wife! my free-born maid—
The virgin standard of my pride and manhood,
Of peerless motto! rich, and fresh, and shining,
And of device most rare and glorious!
I'll bear off safe with me—unstain'd—untouch'd!

App. Your duty, lictors—Claudius, look to your right!

ICIL. True citizens!

Tit. Down with the traitor!

Ser. Down with him—Slay him!

[*The Lictors and CLAUDIUS are driven back; CLAUDIUS takes refuge at APPIUS's feet, who has descended, and throws up his arms as a signal to both parties to desist—whereupon the people retire a little.*

App. So, friends! we thank you that you don't deprive us Of everything; but leave your magistrates At least their persons sacred—Their decrees, It seems, you value as you value straws, And in like manner break them. Wherefore stop When you have gone so far? You might, methinks, As well have kill'd my client, at my feet; As threaten'd him with death before my face! Rise, Claudius! I perceive Icilius' aim:— He labours to restore the tribuneship By means of a sedition! We'll not give him The least pretence of quarrel. We shall wait Virginius's arrival till to-morrow. His friends take care to notice him—The camp's But four hours' journey from the city. Till To-morrow, then, let me prevail with you To yield up something of your right, and let The girl remain at liberty.

Claud. If they

Produce security for her appearance, I am content.

Tit. I'll be your security.

Ser. And I.

Cit. We'll all be your security. [*They hold up their hands.*

ICIL. My friends,

And fellow-citizens, I thank you; but Reserve your kindness for to-morrow, friends, If Claudius still persist—To-day I hope He will remain content with my security, And that of Numitorius, for the maid's Appearance.

App. See she do appear!—and come Prepared to pay the laws more reverence, As I shall surely see that they receive it.

[*APPIUS, CLAUDIUS, and Lictors go out.*

ICIL. Look up! look up! my sweet Virginia, Look up! look up! You will see none but friends. O that such eyes should e'er meet other object!

Virginia. Icilius! Unle! lead me home! Icilius, You did not think to take a slave to wife?

ICIL. I thought, and think to wed a free-born maid; And thou, and thou alone, art she, Virginia!

Virginia. I feel as I were so—I do not think I am his slave! Virginius not my father!

Virginius, my dear father, not my father!
It cannot be; my life must come from him;
For, make him not my father, it will go
From me.—I could not live an he were not
My father.

Icil. Dear Virginia, calm thy thoughts—
But who shall warn Virginius?

Num. I've ta'en care
Of that; no sooner heard I of this claim,
Than I despatch'd thy brother Lucius,
Together with my son, to bring Virginius,
With all the speed they could; and caution'd them—
As he is something over-quick of temper,
And might snatch justice, rather than sue for it—
To evade communication of the cause,
And merely say his presence was required,
Till we should have him with us. Come, Virginia;
Thy uncle's house shall guard thee, till thou find'st
Within thy father's arms a citadel,
Whence Claudius cannot take thee!

Icil. He shall take
A thousand lives first.

Tit. Ay, ten thousand lives.

Icil. Hear you, Virginia! Do you hear your friends?

Virginia. Let him take *my* life first! I am content
To be his slave then—if I am his slave!

Icil. Thou art a free-born Roman maid, Virginia;
All Rome doth know thee so, Virginia—
All Rome will see thee so.

Cit. We will! We will!

Icil. You'll meet us here to-morrow?

Cit. Every man!

Icil. Cease not to clamour 'gainst this outrage. Tell it
In every corner of the city; and

Let no man call himself a son of Rome
Who stands aloof, when tyranny assails
Her fairest daughter. Come, Virginia,
'Tis not a private, but a common wrong;
'Tis every father's, lover's, freeman's cause;
To-morrow, fellow-citizens! to-morrow!

Cit. To-morrow!

[*They go out severally.*]

SCENE IV.—*The Camp.*

Enter S. OPPIUS and Q. F. VIBULANUS.

Opp. Has he set out?

Vibul. He has, my Oppius,
And never to return; his guard, instructed
To take good care of him. There's not a man
But's ten times sold to us, and of our wishes
Fully possess'd. Dentatus will no more

Obstruct us in our plans. He did not like
The site of our encampment. He will find
At least the air of it was wholesome.

Opp. What

Report are they instructed to bring back?

Vibul. They fell into an ambush—He was slain.

Opp. But should the truth by any means ooze out?

Vibul. Imprison them, and secretly despatch them,
Or ope the dungeon-doors, and let them 'scape.

Opp. I should prefer the latter method.

Vibul. Well,

That be our choice. But when it is determined
To spill blood otherwise than as it may
Be spill'd, to hesitate about some drops
Is weakness, may be fatal.—Come, my friend,
Let us be seen about the camp, and ready,
With most admiring ear, to catch the tidings,
Which all ears, save our own, will wonder at.
Here's one that went with him!

Enter MARCUS.

Well, friend, your news?

Marc. Dentatus is no more; but he has dearly sold his life.
The matter has been reported as you directed. By few it is
received with credence—by many with doubt; while some
bold spirits stop not at muttering, but loudly speak suspicion
of foul play. A party that we met, a mile beyond the lines,
no sooner heard our story, than they set off to bring the body
to the camp. Others have followed them. Fabius, we have
your gage for safety.

Vibul. You have.—Come, let us show ourselves.—Guilt
hides,

And we must wear the port of innocence,
That walks abroad and looks its foes in the face. [*They go out.*]

SCENE V.—*A Mountainous Pass.*

*The body of DENTATUS discovered on a bier—Soldiers mourning
over it.*

Trumpets—Enter VIRGINIUS and Soldiers.

Virginus. Where is Dentatus? Where is the gallant soldier?
Ah, comrade! comrade! warm! yet warm! So lately
Gone, when I would have given the world, only
To say farewell to thee, or even get
A parting look! O gallant, gallant soldier,
The god of war might sure have spared a head
Grown grey in serving him! My brave old comrade!
The father of the field! Thy silver locks
Other anointing should receive, than what
Their master's blood could furnish!

1st Soldier. There has been treachery here!

Virgilius. What!

1st Soldier. The slain are all our own. None of the bodies are stripp'd—These are all Romans. There is not the slightest trace of an enemy's retreat—And, now, that I remember, they made a sudden halt, when we came in sight of them at the foot of the mountain—Mark'd you not, too, with what confused haste they told their story, directed us, and hurried on to the camp?

Virgilius. Revenge! The decemvirs! Ay, the decemvirs! For every drop of blood thou shalt have ten,
Dentatus!

Luc. [without]. Ho! Virgilius!

Virgilius. Here! Who calls?

Luc. [entering]. 'Tis well you're found, Virgilius!

Virgilius. Is it you?

What makes you from the city? Look, my Lucius!—

See what a sight you've come to witness!—Look!

My brave old comrade! Honest Siccus!

Siccus Dentatus, that true son of Rome,

On whose white locks the mother look'd more proudly

Than on the raven ones of her youngest and

Most hopeful sons, is nothing now but this,

The sign and token of himself! Look, comrades,

Here are the foes that slew him! Not a trace

Of any other—not a body stripp'd—

Our father has been murder'd—We'll revenge him

Like sons! Take up the body! Bear it to

The camp; and as you move your solemn march,

Be dumb—or, if you speak, be it but a word,

And be that word—Revenge!

[The Soldiers bear off the body—VIRGINIUS following,
is stopped by LUCIUS.]

Luc. Virgilius!

Virgilius. I did not mind thee, Lucius!

Uncommon things make common things forgot.

Hast thou a message for me, Lucius? Well,

I'll stay and hear it—but be brief; my heart

Follows my poor Dentatus!

Luc. You are wanted

In Rome.

Virgilius. On what account?

Luc. On your arrival

You'll learn.

Virgilius. How! is it something can't be told

At once? Speak out, boy! Ha! your looks are loaded

With matter—Is't so heavy that your tongue

Cannot unburthen them? Your brother left

The camp on duty yesterday—Hath aught

Happen'd to him? Did he arrive in safety?

Is he safe? Is he well?

Luc. He is both safe and well.

Virginus. What then? What then? Tell me the matter,
Lucius.

Luc. I have said
It shall be told you.

Virginus. Shall! I stay not for
That "shall," unless it be so close at hand
It stop me not a moment.—'Tis too long
A coming! Fare you well, my Lucius.

Luc. Stay,
Virginus; hear me then with patience.

Virginus. Well,
I am patient.

Luc. Your Virginia—

Virginus. Stop, my Lucius!
I'm cold in every member of my frame!
If 'tis prophetic, Lucius, of thy news,
Give me such token as her tomb would, Lucius—
I'll bear it better—Silence.

Luc. You are still—

Virginus. I thank thee, Jupiter! I am still a father!

Luc. You are, Virginus; yet—

Virginus. What, is she sick?

Luc. No.

Virginus. Neither dead nor sick! All well! No harm!
Nothing amiss! Each guarded quarter safe,
That Fear may lay him down and sleep, and yet
Still sounding the alarm! I swear thou tell'st
A story strangely. Out with't! I have patience
For anything, since my Virginia lives,
And lives in health!

Luc. You are required in Rome,
To answer a most novel suit.

Virginus. Whose suit?

Luc. The suit of Claudius.

Virginus. Claudius!

Luc. Him that's client

To Appius Claudius, the decemvir.

Virginus. What!

That pander!—Ha!—Virginia!—You appear
To couple them! What makes my fair Virginia
In company with Claudius? Innocence
Beside lasciviousness! His suit! What suit?—
Answer me quickly!—Quickly! lest suspense,
Beyond what patience can endure, coercing,
Drive reason from her seat!

Luc. He has claim'd Virginia.

Virginus. Claim'd her!—Claim'd her!—
On what pretence?

Luc. He says she is the child
Of a slave of his, who sold her to thy wife.

Virginus. Go on, you see I'm calm.

Luc. He seized her in

The school, and dragg'd her to the Forum, where Appius was giving judgment.

Virginus. Dragg'd her to The Forum! Well! I told you, Lucius, I would be patient.

Luc. Numitorius there Confronted him.

Virginus. Did he not strike him dead?—True, true, I know it was in presence of The decemvir.—O! had I confronted him!—Well? well? The issue?—Well?—O'erleap all else, And light upon the issue! Where is she?

Luc. I was despatch'd to fetch thee, ere I could learn.

Virginus. The claim of Claudius, Appius' client—Ha! I see the master cloud!—This ragged one, That lowers before, moves only in subservience To the ascendant of the other—Jove, With its own mischief break it and disperse it, And that be all the ruin! Patience! Prudence! Nay, prudence, but no patience. Come!—A slave—Dragg'd through the streets in open day! My child! My daughter! my fair daughter, in the eyes Of Rome! O, I'll be patient!—Come!—The essence Of my best blood in the free common ear Condemn'd as vile!—O, I'll be patient!—Come! O, they shall wonder—I will be so patient!

[VIRGINIUS *rushes out*, followed by LUCIUS.]

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Numitorius's House.*

VIRGINIA *discovered*, supported by SERVIA.

Virginia. Is he not yet arrived? Will he not come?

Servia. He surely will.

Virginia. He surely will! More surely He had arrived already, had he known How he is wanted—They have miss'd him, Servia! Don't tell me, but I know they have, or surely We had not now been looking for him. Where's My uncle?

Servia. Finding you had fallen asleep After such watching, he went forth to hear If there were any tidings of Virginus. He's here.

Enter NUMITORIUS; VIRGINIA looks at him inquisitively for some time.

Virginia. Not come! not come! I am sure of it!
He will not come! Do you not think he'll come?
Will not my father come? What think you, uncle?
Speak to me, speak—O give me any words,
Rather than what looks utter!

Num. Be composed!
I hope he'll come!

Virginia. A little while ago
You were sure of it—from certainty to hope
Is a poor step. You hope he'll come—One hope,
One little hope to face a thousand fears!
Do you not know he'll come? O uncle, wherefore
Do you not know he'll come? Had I been you,
I had made sure of it!

Num. All has been done
That could be done.

Virginia. Poor all, that does so little!
One would imagine little needs be done
To bring a father to the succour of
His child! 'Tis near the time!

Num. It is indeed!
Virginia. Must I go forth with you? Must I again
Be dragg'd along by Claudius, as his slave,
And none again to succour me? Icilius!
Icilius! Does your new betrothed wife
Call on you, and you hear not? My Icilius!
Am I to be your wife, or Claudius' slave?
Where—where are you, Icilius!

ICILIUS [*entering*].

My Virginia!
What's to be done, my friend? 'tis almost time.

[*To NUMITORIUS.*]

Virginia. I hear what you are saying—it is time—
O, who could have believed it, that Icilius
Should ever say 'twas time to yield me to
Another's claim—And will you give me up?
Can you devise no means to keep me from him?
Could we not fly?

[*ICILIUS looks earnestly at NUMITORIUS, who fixes his eyes steadfastly on the ground: ICILIUS droops his head.*]

I see!—your pledge
Must be redeem'd, although it cost you your
Virginia!

Virginius [*without*]. Is she here?

Virginia. Ah!

[*Shrieks and rushes into her father's arms, who enters at the moment.*]

Virginius. My child! My child!

Virginia. I am! I feel I am! I know I am!
 My father! my dear father. I despair'd
 Of seeing you! You're come! and come in time.
 And, O! how much the more in time, when hope
 Had given you up. O! welcome, welcome foot,
 Whose wish'd step is heard when least expected!

Virginus. Brother! Icilius! thank you! thank you—All
 Has been communicated to me. Ay!
 And would they take thee from me? Let them try it!
 You've ta'en your measures well—I scarce could pass
 Along, so was I check'd by loving hands
 Ready to serve me—Hands with hearts in them!
 So thou art Claudius' slave? And if thou art,
 I'm surely not thy father! Blister'd villain!
 You have warn'd our neighbours, have you not, to attend
 As witnesses? To be sure you have! A fool
 To ask the question. Dragg'd along the streets too!
 'Twas very kind in him to go himself
 And fetch thee—such an honour should not pass
 Without acknowledgment. I shall return it
 In full! In full!

Num. Pray you be prudent, brother.

Virginia. Dear father, be advised—Will you not, father?

Virginus. I never saw you look so like your mother
 In all my life!

Virginia. You'll be advised, dear father?

Virginus. It was her soul—her soul, that play'd just then
 About the features of her child, and lit them
 Into the likeness of her own. When first
 She placed thee in my arms—I recollect it
 As a thing of yesterday!—she wish'd, she said,
 That it had been a man. I answer'd her,
 It was the mother of a race of men,
 And paid her for thee with a kiss. Her lips
 Are cold now—could they be but warm'd again,
 How they would clamour for thee!

Virginia. My dear father!

You do not answer me! Will you not be advised?

Virginus. I will not take him by the throat and strangle him!
 But I could do it! I could do it! Fear not:
 I will not strike while any head I love
 Is in the way. It is not now a time
 To tell thee—but, wouldst thou believe it!—Honest
 Siccus Dentatus has been murder'd by them!

Icil. Murder'd!

Num. Dentatus murder'd!

Virginia. O! how much
 Have we to fear!

Virginus. We have the less to fear!
 I spread the news at every step—A fire
 Is kindled, that will blaze at but a breath
 Into the fiercest flame!

Num. 'Tis time. Let's haste
To the Forum.

Virginus. Let the Forum wait for us !
Put on no show of fear, when villany
Would wrestle with you ! It can keep its feet
Only with cowards ! I shall walk along
Slowly and calmly, with my daughter thus
In my hand—though with another kind of gripe
Than that which Claudius gave her—Well, I say,
I'll walk along thus, in the eyes of Rome.
Go you before, and what appeal soe'er
You please, make you to rouse up friends. For me,
I shall be mute—my eloquence is here—
Her tears—her youth—her innocence—her beauty !
If orators like these can't move the heart,
Tongues surely may be dumb.

Scilius. A thousand hearts
Have spoke already in her cause !

Virginus. Come on !
Fear not ! it is your father's grasp you feel.
O he'll be strong as never man was yet,
That takes thee from it. Come, Virginia ;
We trust our cause to Rome and to the gods ! [They go out.

SCENE II.—*The Forum.*

Enter APPIUS and Lictors.

App. See you keep back the people ! Use your fasces
With firmer hands, or hearts. Your hands are firm
Enough, would but your hearts perform their office,
And leave your hands at liberty ; not hang
Upon them with unseemly fears and clamours !
Look to it ! Time ! hadst thou the theme that I have
For speed, thou wouldst not move this cripple's gait :
But there's no urging thee, and thou wast ever
Dull fellow-traveller to young Impatience,
Dragging him back upon the road he pants
To end, but cannot run without thee.

Enter MARCUS.

Well ?

Marc. News has arrived, that speaks as if Dentatus
Was murder'd by the order of your colleagues !
There's not a face I meet but lowers with it :
The streets are fill'd with thronging groups, that, as
I pass'd, grew silent, and look'd sullen round,
Then fell again to converse.

App. 'Tis ill-timed.

Marc. What say you, Appius ?

App. Murder's ill-timed, I say,

Happen when 'twill: but now is most ill timed,
 When Rome is in a ferment, on account
 Of Claudius, and this girl, he calls his slave;
 For come when evil will, or how it will,
 All's laid to our account! Look out and see
 If Claudius be approaching yet. [MARCUS goes out.

My wish,
 Like an officious friend, comes out of time
 To tell me of success. I had rather far
 The plot had fail'd. The waves run high enough;
 There needed not this squall on squall to raise them
 Above the present swell:
 But such a haven,
 If won, can never be too dearly won!
Marc. [entering]. Claudius is here!

Enter CLAUDIUS.

App. Well, Claudius, are the forces
 At hand?

Claud. They are, and timely too! The people
 Are in unwonted ferment.

App. Marcus says
 That news has come of old Dentatus' death;
 Which, as I hear, and wonder not to hear it,
 The mutinous citizens lay to our account!

Claud. That's bad enough; yet—

App. Ha! what's worse?

Claud. 'Tis best

At once to speak what you must learn at last,
 Yet last of all would learn.

App. Virginius!

Claud. Yes!

He has arrived in Rome.

Marc. They are coming, Appius!

Claud. Fly, Marcus, hurry down the forces! [MARCUS goes
 out.] Appius,
 Be not o'erwhelm'd!

App. There's something awes me at
 The thought of looking on her father!

Claud. Look
 Upon her, my Appius! Fix your gaze upon
 The treasures of her beauty, nor avert it
 Till they are thine. Haste! Your tribunal! Haste!
 [APPIUS ascends his tribunal.

Enter NUMITORIUS, ICILIUS, LUCIUS, Citizens, VIRGINIUS
 leading his Daughter, SERVIA, and Citizens.—A dead silence
 prevails.

Virginius. Does no one speak? I am defendant here.
 Is silence my opponent? Fit opponent
 To plead a cause too foul for speech! What brow,
 In blank defiance both of gods and men,

Is bold enough to back the knave, whose tongue
 Advanced the forged claim that stirs this suit
 To compass the dishonour of my child—
 For that's the game!—and now the trial's come,
 Through shame or fear, has lost the power to wage
 And ope the villain pleadings!

App. You had better,
 Virginius, wear another kind of carriage:
 This is not of the fashion that will serve you.

Virginius. The fashion, Appius! Appius Claudius, tell me
 The fashion it becomes a man to speak in,
 Whose property in his own child—the offspring
 Of his own body, near to him as is
 His hand, his arm—yea, nearer—closer far,
 Knit to his heart—I say, who has his property
 In such a thing, the very self of himself,
 Disputed—and I'll speak so, Appius Claudius;
 I'll speak so.—Pray you, tutor me!

App. Stand forth,
 Claudius! If you lay claim to any interest
 In the question now before us, speak; if not,
 Bring on some other cause.

Claud. Most noble Appius—

Virginius. And are you the man
 That claims my daughter for his slave?—Look at me,
 And I will give her to thee.

Claud. She is mine, then:
 Do I not look at you?

Virginius. Your eye does, truly,
 But not your soul.—I see it through your eye
 Shifting and shrinking—turning every way
 To shun me. You surprise me, that your eye,
 So long the bully of its master, knows not
 To put a proper face upon a lie,
 But gives the port of impudence to falsehood,
 When it would pass it off for truth. Your soul
 Dares as soon show its face to me.—Go on,
 I had forgot; the fashion of my speech
 May not please Appius Claudius.

Claud. I demand
 Protection of the decemvir!

App. You shall have it.

Virginius. Doubtless!

App. Keep back the people, lictors! What's
 Your plea? You say the girl's your slave—Produce
 Your proofs.

Claud. My proof is here, which, if they can,
 Let them confront. The mother of the girl—

[VIRGINIUS, stepping forward to speak, is withheld by
 NUMITORIUS.]

Num. Hold, brother! Hear them out, or suffer me
 To speak.

NOU

Virginius. Man, I must speak, or else go mad !
 And if I do go mad, what then will hold me
 From speaking ? Wer't not better, brother, think you,
 To speak and not go mad, than to go mad
 And then to speak ? She was thy sister, too !
 Well, well, speak thou. I'll try, and, if I can,
 Be silent.

[Retires.

Num. Will she swear she is her child ?

Virginius [starting forward]. To be sure she will—a most
 wise question that !

Is she not his slave ! Will his tongue lie for him—
 Or his hand steal—or the finger of his hand
 Beckon, or point, or shut, or open for him ?
 To ask him if she'll swear—Will she walk or run,
 Sing, dance, or wag her head ; do anything
 That is most easy done ? She'll as soon swear !
 What mockery it is to have one's life
 In jeopardy by such a barefaced trick !
 Is it to be endured ? I do protest
 Against her oath !

App. No law in Rome, Virginius,
 Seconds you. If she swear the girl's her child,
 The evidence is good, unless confronted
 By better evidence. Look you to that,
Virginius. I shall take the woman's oath.

Virginia. Icilius !

Icil. Fear not, love ; a thousand oaths
 Will answer her.

App. You swear the girl's your child,
 And that you sold her to Virginius' wife,
 Who pass'd her for her own. Is that your oath ?
Slave. It is my oath.

App. Your answer now, Virginius.

Virginius. Here it is ! [Brings VIRGINIA forward.

Is this the daughter of a slave ? I know
 'Tis not with men, as shrubs and trees, that by
 The shoot you know the rank and order of
 The stem. Yet who from such a stem would look
 For such a shoot ? My witnesses are these—
 The relatives and friends of Numitoria,
 Who saw her, ere Virginia's birth, sustain
 The burden which a mother bears, nor feels
 The weight, with longing for the sight of it !
 Here are the ears that listen'd to her sighs
 In nature's hour of labour, which subsides
 In the embrace of joy !—the hands, that when
 The day first look'd upon the infant's face,
 And never look'd so pleased, help'd her up to it,
 And thank'd the gods for her, and pray'd them send
 Blessing on blessing on her.—Here, the eyes
 That saw her lying at the generous
 And sympathetic fount, that at her cry

Sent forth a stream of liquid living pearl
To cherish her enamell'd veins. The lie
Is most abortive then, that takes the flower—
The very flower our bed connubial grew—
To prove its barrenness! Speak for me, friends;
Have I not spoke the truth?

Women and Citizens. You have, Virginius.

App. Silence!—Keep silence there! No more of that!
You're ever ready for a tumult, citizens. [*Troops appear behind.*
Lictors, make way to let these troops advance.
We've had a taste of your forbearance, masters,
And wish not for another!

Virginius. Troops in the Forum!

App. Virginius, have you spoken?

Virginius. If you have heard me,
I have: if not, I'll speak again.

App. You need not,
Virginius; I have evidence to give,
Which, should you speak a hundred times again,
Would make your pleading vain.

Virginius. Your hand, Virginia!
Stand close to me.

[*Aside.*

App. My conscience will not let me
Be silent. 'Tis notorious to you all,
That Claudius' father, at his death, declared me
The guardian of his son. This cheat has long
Been known to me. I know the girl is not
Virginius' daughter.

Virginius. Join your friends, Icilius,
And leave Virginia to my care.

[*Aside.*

App. The justice
I should have done my client unrequired,
Now cited by him, how shall I refuse?

Virginius. Don't tremble, girl! don't tremble.

[*Aside.*

App. Nay, Virginius,
I feel for you; but, though you were my father,
The majesty of justice should be sacred—
Claudius must take Virginia home with him.

Virginius. And if he must, I should advise him, Appius,
To take her home in time, before his guardian
Complete the violation, which his eyes
Already have begun—Friends! Fellow-citizens!
Look not on Claudius—Look on your decemvir!
He is the master claims Virginia!

The tongues that told him she was not my child
Are these—the costly charms he cannot purchase,
Except by making her the slave of Claudius—
His client!—purveyor!—that caters for
His pleasures—markets for him—picks, and scents,
And tastes, that he may banquet—serves him up
His sensual feast, and is not now ashamed,
In the open, common street, before your eyes—

W. G. L.

Frighting your daughters' and your matrons' cheeks
 With blushes they ne'er thought to meet—to help him
 To the honour of a Roman maid!—my child!
 Who now clings to me, as you see, as if
 This second Tarquin had already coil'd
 His arms around her. Look upon her, Romans!
 Befriend her! Succour her! See her not polluted
 Before her father's eyes!—He is but one!
 Tear her from Appius and his lictors, while
 She is unstain'd. Your hands! your hands! your hands!

Cit. They're yours, Virginius.

App. Keep the people back!
 Support my lictors, soldiers! Seize the girl,
 And drive the people back.

Icil. Down with the slaves!—

*[The people make a show of resistance, but, upon the
 advancing of the soldiers, retreat, and leave ICILIUS,
 VIRGINIUS, and his daughter, &c., in the hands of
 APPIUS and his party.]*

Deserted!—Cowards! Traitors! Let me free
 But for a moment! I relied on you!
 Had I relied upon myself alone,
 I had kept them all at bay! I kneel to you—
 Let me but loose a moment, if 'tis only
 To rush upon your swords!

Virginius. Icilius, peace!
 You see how 'tis! We are deserted, left
 Alone by our friends, surrounded by our enemies,
 Nerveless and helpless.

App. Take Icilius hence;
 Away with him!

Icil. Tyrant!—Virginia!

[ICILIUS is forced off.]

App. Separate
 Virginius and the girl!—Delay not, slaves.

Virginius. Let them forbear awhile, I pray you, Appius:
 It is not very easy. Though her arms
 Are tender, yet the hold is strong, by which
 She grasps me, Appius. Forcing them will hurt them.
 They'll soon unclasp themselves. Wait but a little:
 You know you're sure of her!

App. I have not time
 To idle with thee; give her to my lictors.

Virginius. Appius, I pray you, wait! If she is not
 My child, she hath been like a child to me
 For fifteen years. If I am not her father,
 I have been like a father to her, Appius,
 For e'en so long a time. They that have lived
 For such a space together, in so near
 And dear society, may be allow'd
 A little time for parting! Let me take
 The maid aside, I pray you, to confer
 A moment with her nurse; perhaps she'll give me

Some token, will unloose a tie, so twined
And knotted round my heart, that if you break it,
So suddenly, my heart breaks with it!

App. Well!

Look to them, lictors!

Virginia. Do you go from me!

Do you leave! Father! Father!

Virginius. No, my child;

No, my Virginia—come along with me.

Virginia. Will you not leave me? Will you take me with you?

Will you take me home again? O, bless you, bless you!

My father! my dear father! Art thou not

My father?

[*VIRGINIUS, perfectly at a loss what to do, looks anxiously around the Forum; at length his eye falls on a butcher's stall with a knife upon it.*

Virginius. This way, my Virginia! This way!

Virginia. Go

We home?

Virginius. Don't fear! Don't fear, I am not going—

To leave thee, my Virginia! I'll not leave thee.

App. Keep back the people, soldiers! Let them not
Approach Virginius! Keep the people back!

[*VIRGINIUS seizes the knife.*

Well, have you done?

Virginius. Short time for converse, Appius;

But I have.

App. I hope you are satisfied.

Virginius. I am—

I am—that she is my daughter!

App. Take her, lictors!

[*VIRGINIA shrieks, and falls half-dead upon her father's shoulder.*

Virginius. Another moment, pray you. Bear with me

A little—'Tis my last embrace. 'Twon't try

Your patience beyond bearing, if you're a man!

Lengthen it as I may, I cannot make it

Long! My dear child! My dear Virginia! [*Kissing her.*

There is one only way to save thine honour—

'Tis this!—

[*Stabs her, and draws out the knife. ICILIUS breaks from the Soldiers that held him, and catches her.*

Lo! Appius! with this innocent blood,

I do devote thee to th' infernal gods!

Make way there!

App. Stop him! Seize him!

Virginius. If they dare

To tempt the desperate weapon, that is madden'd

With drinking my daughter's blood, why let them: thus

It rushes in amongst them. Way there! Way!

[*Goes out through the Soldiers.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Street.**Enter APPIUS and MARCUS.*

App. I do abjure all further league with them :
 They have most basely yielded up their power,
 And compromised their glory. Had they died
 In their high seats, they had lived demi-gods ;
 But now they live to die like basest men !
 Power gone, life follows ! Well ! 'tis well we know
 The worst ! The worst ?—The worst is yet to come ;
 And, if I err not, hither speeds a messenger
 Whose heel it treads upon ! Well, Vibulanus ?

Enter VIBULANUS, hastily, and other Decemvirs, with MARCUS.

Vibul. Honorius and Valerius are elected
 To the consulate.—Virginius is made tribune.

App. No doubt they'd snatch their offices, when ours
 Were laid so poorly down. You have acted wisely !

Vibul. Who could resist Virginius, raving at
 The head of the revolted troops, with all
 The commons up in arms ? Waste not dear time !
 Look to your safety, Appius. 'Tis resolved
 To cite you instantly before the consuls.

App. Look to my safety, say you ? You would bid
 A man, that's tumbling from a precipice
 A hundred fathoms high, and midway down,
 Look to his safety ! What has he to snatch at ?
 Air !—E'en so much have I.

Vibul. Withdraw awhile
 From Rome. We shall recall you with applause
 And honours.

App. Yes ! You saw me on the brink—
 Beheld it giving way beneath my feet—
 And saw me tottering o'er the hideous leap,
 Whose sight sent round the brain with madd'ning whirl,
 With but a twig to stay me, which you cut,
 Because it was your friend that hung by it—
 Most kindly !

Vibul. Nay, employ the present time
 In looking to your safety—that secured,
 Reproach us as you will.

App. I am in your hands,
 Lead me which way you please.

ICIL. [*without*]. Hold ! Stand !

App. Icilius !

*ICILIUS enters, with HONORIUS and VALERIUS as Consuls,
 NUMITORIUS and Lictors.*

ICIL. Did I not tell you 'twas the tyrant ? Look,

Was I not right? I felt that he was present
Ere mine eye told it me.—You are our prisoner!

App. On what pretence, Icilius?

Icil. Ask of poor

Virginus, tottering between despair
And madness, as he seeks the home, where once
He found a daughter!

App. I demand due time
To make up my defence.

Icil. Demand due time!

Appius!—Assign the cause, why you denied
A Roman maid, of free condition,
Her liberty provisionally, while
Her plea remain'd unjudged. No answer, Appius?
Lictors, lay hold upon him—to prison with him!
Look to him well. To prison with the tyrant!

[*APPIUS and Lictors go out on one side; ICILIUS and
NUMITORIUS on the other.*]

Vibul. Let all his friends, that their own safety prize,
Solicit straight for his enlargement; doff
Their marks of station, and to the vulgar eye
Disguise it with the garb of mourning; 'twill
Conciliate the crowd. We know them well:
But humour them, they are water soon as fire!

[*They go out severally.*]

SCENE II.—*Virginus's House.*

Enter LUCIUS and SERVIA.

Luc. Is he not yet come home?

Servia. Not since her death.

I dread his coming home, good Lucius.

Luc. A step! 'Tis Numitorius and Virginus.

Servia. Gods! how he looks!—See, Lucius, how he looks!

Enter VIRGINIUS, attended by NUMITORIUS and others.

Virginus. 'Tis ease! 'Tis ease! I am content! 'Tis peace,
'Tis anything that is most soft and quiet.
And after such a dream!—I want my daughter;
Send me my daughter!

Num. Yes, his reason's gone.

Scarce had he come in sight of his once sweet
And happy home, ere with a cry he fell
As one struck dead.—When to himself he came,
We found him as you see. How is it, brother?

Virginus. How should it be but well? Our cause is good.
Think you Rome will stand by, and see a man
Robb'd of his child? We are bad enough, but yet
They should not so mistake us. We are slaves,
But not yet monsters.—Call my daughter to me.

What keeps her thus? I never stepp'd within
The threshold yet, without her meeting me
With a kiss. She's very long a-coming. Call her!
Num. Icilius comes! See, my Icilius, see!

Enter ICILIUS.

Virginius. Come, come, make ready. Brother, you and he
Go on before: I'll bring her after you.

Icil. Ha!

Num. My Icilius, what a sight is there!
Virginius' reason is a wreck, so stripp'd
And broken up by wave and wind, you scarce
Would know it was the gallant bark you saw
Riding so late in safety!

Icil. [*taking VIRGINIUS's hand*]. Father! Father!
That art no more a father!

Virginius. Ha! what wet
Is this upon my hand? A tear, boy! Fie,
For shame! Is that the weapon you would guard
Your bride with? First essay what steel can do!

Num. Not a tear has bless'd his eye since her death! No
wonder.

The fever of his brain, that now burns out,
Has drunk the source of sorrow's torrents dry.

Icil. You would not have it otherwise? 'Twas fit
The bolt, that struck the sole remaining branch,
And blasted it, should set the trunk on fire!

Num. If we could make him weep—

Icil. Her urn!

'Twas that which first drew tears from me. I'll fetch it.

Yet scarcely think it wise, to wake a man
Who's at the mercy of a tempest! Better
You suffer him to sleep it through.

[*ICILIUS goes out.*]

Virginius. Gather your friends together!—Tell them of
Dentatus' murder!—Screw the chord of rage
To the topmost pitch!—Mine own is not mine own! [*Laughs.*]
That's strange enough. Why does he not dispute
My right to my own flesh, and tell my heart
Its blood is not its own? He might as well!
But I want my child!

Enter LUCIUS.

Luc. Justice will be defeated.

Virginius. Who says that?

He lies in the face of the gods! She is immutable,
Immaculate, and immortal!—and though all
The guilty globe should blaze, she will spring up
Through the fire, and soar above the crackling pile,
With not a downy feather ruffled by
Its fierceness!

Num. He is not himself! What new
Oppression comes to tell us to our teeth,

We only mock'd ourselves to think the days
Of thralldom past?

Luc. The friends of Appius
Beset the people with solicitations.
The fickle crowd, that change with every change,
Begin to doubt and soften. Every moment
That's lost, a friend is lost. Appear among
Your friends, or lose them!

Num. Lucius, you
Remain, and watch Virginius.

[Goes out, followed by all but LUCIUS and SERVIA.]

Virginius. You remember,
Don't you, nurse?

Ser. What, Virginius?

Virginius. That she nursed
The child herself! Inquire among your gossips,
Which of them saw it; and, with such of them
As can avouch the fact, without delay
Repair to the Forum! Will she come or not?
I'll call myself!—She will not dare!—O when
Did my Virginia dare—Virginia!
Is it a voice, or nothing answers me?
I hear a sound so fine—there's nothing lives
'Twixt it and silence!

[Goes out, and almost immediately returns.]

Aha! She is not here!
They told me she was here—they have deceived me;
And Appius was not made to give her up,
But keeps her, and effects his wicked purpose,
While I stand talking here, and ask you if
My daughter is my daughter! Though a legion
Sentry'd that brothel, which he calls his palace,
I'd tear her from him!

Luc. Hold, Virginius! Stay!
Appius is now in prison.

Virginius. With my daughter!
He has secured her there! Ha! has he so?
Gay office for a dungeon! Hold me not,
Or I will dash you down, and spoil you for
My keeper. My Virginia, struggle with him!
Appal him with thy shrieks; ne'er faint, ne'er faint!
I am coming to thee! I am coming to thee!

*[VIRGINIUS rushes out, followed by LUCIUS, SERVIA,
and others.]*

SCENE III.—A Dungeon.

APPIUS discovered.

App. From the palace to the dungeon is a road
Trod oft—not oft retrod. What hope have I

To pace it back again? I know of none.
 I am as one that's dead! The dungeon, that
 Encloses fallen greatness, may as well
 Be call'd its tomb. I am as much the carcass
 Of myself, as if the string were taken from
 My neck. Their hands long for the office! Oh,
 'Tis worth the half of a plebeian's life
 To get his greasy fingers on the throat
 Of a patrician! But I'll balk them. Come!
 Appius shall have an executioner
 No less illustrious than himself.

[*He is on the point of swallowing poison, when VIBULANUS enters.*]

Who's there?

Vibul. Your friend!

App. My Vibulanus!

Vibul. Appius, what

Was that, you hid in such confusion, as
 I enter'd?

App. 'Tis a draught for life, which swallow'd,
 She relishes so richly, that she cares not
 If she ne'er drink again! Here's health to you!

Vibul. Not out of such a cup as that, my Appius.
 Despair, that bids you drink it, as the cure
 Of canker'd life, but lies to you, and turns
 Your eyes from hope, that even now stands ready
 With outstretch'd arms to rush to your embrace.
 Your friends are busy for you with your foes!
 Your foes become your friends! Where'er a frown
 Appears against you, nothing's spared to make
 The wearer doff it, and put up a smile
 In its stead. Your colleague Oppius is in prison.
 Your client too. Their harm's your safety: it
 Distracts the appetite o' the dogs. They drop
 The morsel they took up before, as soon
 As a new one's thrown to them.

App. Thou givest me life
 Indeed!

Vibul. That I may give thee life indeed,
 I'll waste no longer time with thee; for that
 Already taken to assure thee of
 Thy fast-reviving fortunes, cheats them of
 The aid should help to re-establish them.
 Farewell, my Appius! If my absence takes
 A friend from thee, it leaves one with thee—Hope! [*Goes out.*]

App. And I will clasp it to me! Never friend
 Made sweeter promises! But snatch me from
 Beneath the feet of the vile herd, that's now
 Broke loose and roams at large; I'll show them who
 They'd trample on. Hope! Hope! They say of thee,
 Thou art a friend that promises, but cares not
 To keep his word. This once keep thine with Appius,

And he will give thee out so true a tongue,
 Thy word is bond enough!—At liberty!
 Again at liberty! O give me power
 As well, for every minute of my thralldom
 I'll pick a victim from the common herd
 Shall groan his life in bondage. Liberty!
 'Tis triumph, power, dominion, everything!
 Are ye not open yet, ye servile gates?
 Let fall your chains, and push your bolts aside!
 It is your past and future lord commands you!

Virginus [*rushing in*]. Give me my daughter!

App. Ha!

Virginus. My child! my daughter!

My daughter! my Virginia! Give her me!

App. Thy daughter!

Virginus. Ay! Deny that she is mine,
 And I will strangle thee, unless the lie
 Should choke thee first.

App. Thy daughter!

Virginus. Play not with me!

Provoke me not! Equivocate, and lo!
 Thou sport'st with fire. I am wild!—distracted!—mad!—
 I am all a flame—a flame! I tell thee once
 For all, I want my child, and I will have her;
 So give her to me.

App. Caged with a madman! Hoa!

Without there!

Virginus. Not a step thou stirr'st from hence,
 Till I have found my child. Attempt that noise
 Again, and I will stop the vent, that not
 A squeak shall pass it. There are plugs for you
 Will keep it air-tight [*showing his fingers*]. Please you, give
 me back

My daughter.

App. In truth, she is not here, *Virginus*;
 Or I would give her to thee.

Virginus. Would! Ay, should!

Though would were would not. Do you say, indeed,
 She is not here? You nothing know of her?

App. Nothing, *Virginus*! good *Virginus*, nothing.

Virginus. How if I thrust my hand into your breast,
 And tore your heart out, and confronted it
 With your tongue? I'd like it!—Shall we try it? Fool!
 Are not the ruffians leagued? The one would swear
 To the tale o' the other.

App. By the gods, *Virginus*,
 Your daughter is not in my keeping.

Virginus. Well,

Then I must seek her elsewhere. I did dream
 That I had murder'd her—'Tis false! 'twas but
 A dream.—She isn't here, you say—Well! well!
 Then I must go and seek her elsewhere—Yet

She's not at home—and where else should I seek her
 But there or here? Here! here! here! Yes, I say,
 But there or here—I tell you I must find her—
 She must be here, or what do you here? What,
 But such a wonder of rich beauty could
 Deck out a dungeon so, as to despoil
 A palace of its tenant? Art thou not
 The tyrant Appius?—Didst thou not decree
 My daughter to be Claudius' slave, who gave her
 To his master? Have you not secured her here
 To compass her dishonour, ere her father
 Arrives to claim her?

App. No!

Virginus. Do you tell me so?
 Vile tyrant! Think you, shall I not believe
 My own eyes before your tongue? Why, there she is!
 There, at your back—her looks dishevell'd and
 Her vestment torn! Her cheeks all faded with
 Her pouring tears, as flowers with too much rain!
 Her form no longer kept and treasured up
 By her maiden pride, like a rich casket, cast
 Aside, neglected and forgot, because
 The richer gem was shrined in it is lost!
 Villain! is this a sight to show a father?
 And have I not a weapon to requite thee?

[Searches about his clothes.]

Ha! here are ten!

App. Keep down your hands! Help! help!

Virginus. No other look but that! Look on! look on!
 It turns my very flesh to steel—Brave girl!
 Keep thine eye fix'd—let it not wink—look on!

[They go out, struggling.]

*Enter NUMITORIUS, ICILIUS, LUCIUS, Guard, and Soldier,
 bearing Virginia's urn.*

Num. Not here!

Luc. Is this the dungeon?—Appius is not here,
 Nor yet Virginus. You have sure mistaken.

Guard. This is the dungeon—Here Virginus enter'd.

Num. Yet is not here!—Hush! The abode of death
 Is just as silent. Gods! should the tyrant take
 The father's life, in satisfaction for
 The deed that robb'd him of the daughter's charms—
 Hush! hark! A groan! There's something stirs!

Luc. 'Tis this way!

Num. Come on! Protect him, gods, or pardon me
 If with my own hand I revenge his death. *[They go out.]*

SCENE IV.—*Another Dungeon.*

VIRGINIUS *discovered on one knee, with APPIUS lying dead before him. Enter NUMITORIUS, ICILIUS, LUCIUS, Citizens, and others.*

Num. What's here? Virginius! with the tyrant prostrate and dead!

Luc. His senses are benumb'd! There is no adit to his mind, by which our words can reach it. Help to raise him. The motion may recall perception.

Num. His eye is not so deathlike fixed; it moves a little.

Luc. Speak to him, Numitorius; he knows your voice the best.

Num. Virginius!

Luc. I think he heeds you; speak again.

Num. Virginius!

Virginius. Ah!

Luc. That sigh has burst the spell which held him.

Num. Virginius! my dear brother!

Virginius. Lighter! lighter! My heart is ten times lighter! What a load it has heaved off! Where is he? I thought I had done it.

Num. Virginius!

Virginius. Well, who are you? What do you want? I'll answer what I've done!

Num. Do you not know me, brother? Speak, Icilius, try if he knows you.

Icil. Virginius!

Num. Try again.

Icil. Virginius!

Virginius. That voice—that voice—I know that voice!

It minds me of a voice was coupled with it,

And made such music, once to hear it was

Enough to make it ever after be

Remember'd! [ICILIUS places the urn in his hand.

Ha! What's this?

Icil. Virginia!

[VIRGINIUS looks alternately at ICILIUS and the urn—looks at NUMITORIUS and LUCIUS—seems struck by his mourning—looks at the urn again—bursts into a passion of tears, and exclaims, "VIRGINIA!"—Falls on ICILIUS's neck. Curtain drops.

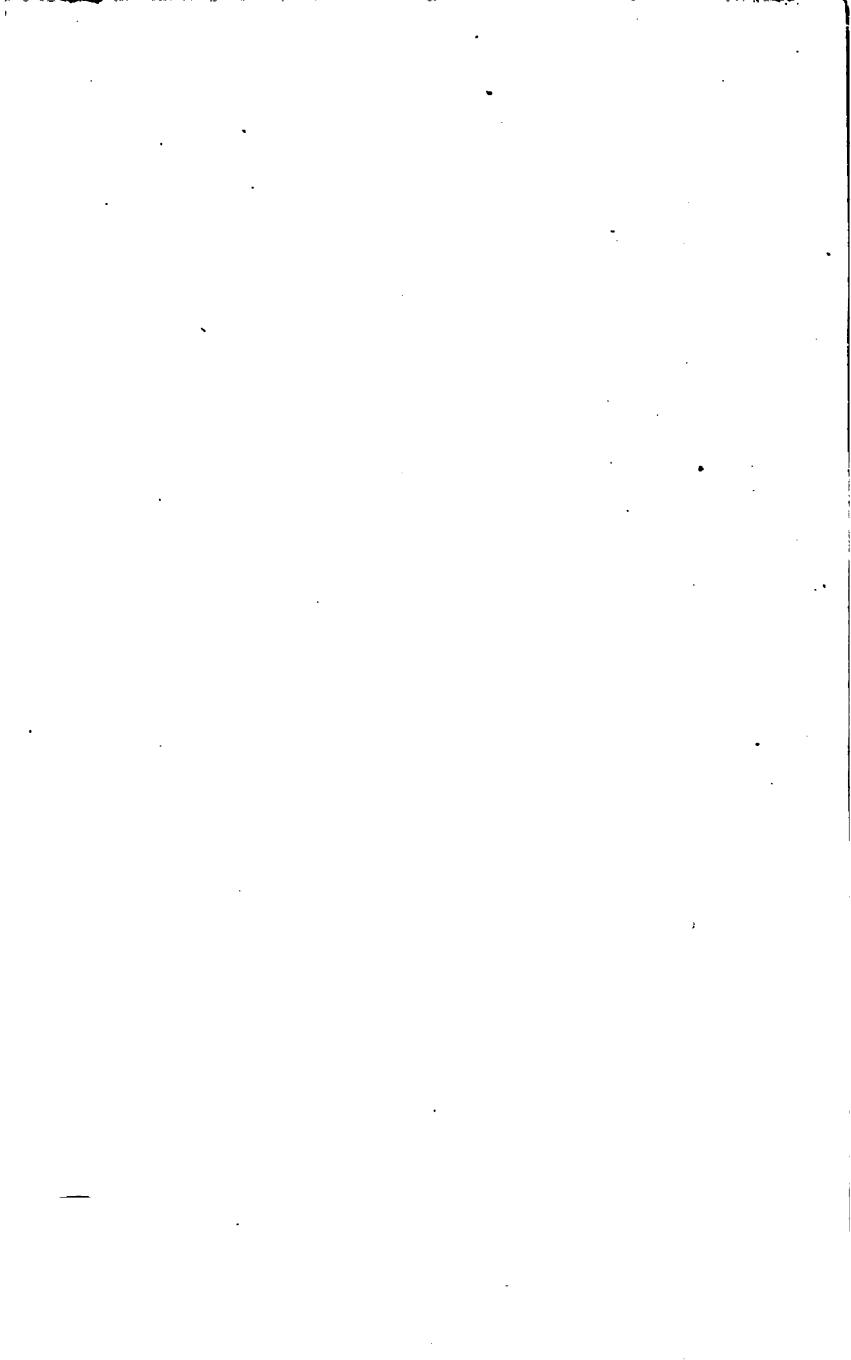
END OF VIRGINIUS.

EPILOGUE,

BY BARRY CORNWALL, ESQ.

SPOKEN BY MISS BRUNTON.

LEAVING the common path, which many tread,
We will not wake with jokes our poet dead;
Nor shame the young creations of his pen,
By bidding all, who've perish'd, be again.
The pale Virginia, in her bloody shroud,
Lies like a shrined saint.—Oh! then, aloud
Shall we break scurril jests, and bid depart
Those thoughts of her, which fill and teach the heart?
No moral now we offer, squared in form,
But Pity, like the sun-light, bright and warm,
Comes mix'd with showers; and, fading, leaves behind
A beauty and a blossom on the mind.
We do not strain to show that "thus it grows."
And "hence we learn" what everybody knows:
But casting idle dogmas (words) aside,
We paint a villain in his purple pride;
And tearing down a power, that grew too bold,
Show—merely what was done in days of old.
Leaving this image on the soul, we go
Unto our gentler story touch'd with woe
(With woe that wantons not, nor wears away
The heart), and love too perfect for decay.
But whatsoe'er we do, we will not shame
Your better feeling, with an idle game
Of grin and mimicry (a loathsome task);
Or strip the great Muse of her mighty mask,
And hoot her from her throne of tears and sighs,
Until from folly and base jest she dies.
No; let her life be long, her reign supreme—
If but a dream, it is a glorious dream.
Dwell then upon our tale; and bear along
With you, deep thoughts—of love—of bitter wrong—
Of freedom—of sad pity—and lust of pow'r.
The tale is fitted for an after-hour.



WILLIAM TELL :

A Play.



DEDICATED TO GENERAL MINA,

IN ADMIRATION

OF HIS PATRIOTISM, VALOUR, AND CONSTANCY.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

(AS ORIGINALLY PERFORMED AT DRURY LANE IN 1825.)

AUSTRIANS.

<i>Gesler</i>	{ Governor of the Waldestetten.. }	Mr. ARCHER.
<i>Sarnem</i>	his Lieutenant ..	Mr. THOMPSON.
<i>Struth</i>	his Seneschal....	Mr. GATTIE.
<i>Rodolph</i>	{ his Castellains .. }	Mr. COMER.
<i>Lutold</i>		Mr. HOWELL.
<i>Gerard</i>		Mr. FENTON.
<i>Braun</i>	{ Servant to the Se- neschal	Mr. KNIGHT.
<i>Anneli</i>	{ Step-daughter to the Seneschal.. }	Miss POVEY.
<i>Agnes</i>	her Cousin	Mrs. YATES.

Archers, &c. &c. &c.

SWISS.

<i>William Tell</i>		Mr. MACREADY.
<i>Albert</i>	his Son	Miss C. FISHER.
<i>Melchtal</i>	Erni's Father....	Mr. YOUNG.
<i>Erni</i>	{ Patriots in league with Tell }	Mr. WEBSTER.
<i>Furst</i>		Mr. ARMSTRONG.
<i>Verner</i>		Mr. MERCER.
<i>Waldman</i>	{ a Burgher of Al- torf	Mr. HUGHES.
<i>Michael</i>	his Son	Mr. WALLACK.
<i>Jagheli</i>	Michael's Friend	Mr. PENLEY.
<i>Pierre</i>	{ Inhabitants of Altorf	Mr. YARNOLD.
<i>Theodore</i>		Mr. O. SMITH.
<i>Savoyards</i>		Master EDMONDS.
		Mr. FITZWILLIAM.
		Mr. FOSTER.
<i>Emma</i>	Tell's Wife.....	Mrs. BUNN.

Burghers, Mountaineers, Women, &c.

SCENE, ALTORF AND THE NEIGHBOURING MOUNTAINS.

WILLIAM TELL.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Outside of the Castle of Altorf.—Alpine Scenery in the Background.*

Enter WALDMAN and MICHAEL.

Wal. Don't tell me, Michael! Thou dost lead a life
As bootless as a jester's—worse than his,
For he has high retaining. Every one
Calls thee his fool—the gallant and the boy,
The gentle-born and base! Thy graceless name
Is ever tagg'd to feasts, and shows, and games,
And saucy brawls, which men as young as thou
Discourse of with grave looks. What comes of this?
Will't make thee rich? Will't give thee place in life?
Will't buy thee honour, friendship, or esteem?
Will't get thee reverence 'gainst grey hairs?

Mic. Good father!—

Wal. The current of thy life doth counter run
To that of other men's. Thy spirits, which
Were reason in thee, when thou wast a child,
As tameless still, now thou'rt become a man,
Are folly! Thriftless life, that may be call'd
More rational, when in the nurse's lap,
Than when in manhood's chair. Survey those towers,
And act the revel o'er of yesternight!
Think of the tyrants whom they lodge, and then
Link hands with fools and braggarts o'er their wine!
Fancy the sounds their dungeons hear, and tell
Of such and such a joke of thine, that made
Thy wanton comrades roar!

Mic. Dear father!

Wal. Pshaw!

Thou canst not try to speak with gravity,
But one perceives thou wagg'st an idle tongue!
Thou canst not try to look demure, but, spite
Of all thou dost, thou show'st a laughter's cheek!
Thou canst not e'en essay to walk sedate,
But in thy very gait one sees the wag,
That's ready to break out in spite of all
Thy seeming!

Mic. I'm a melancholy man,

That can't do that which with good will I would !
I pray thee, father, tell me what will change me ?

Wal. Hire thyself to a sexton, and dig graves.
Never keep company but at funerals.
Beg leave to take thy bed into the church,
And sleep there. Fast, until thine abstinence
Upbraid the anchorite with gluttony.
And when thou talk'st reflection, feast on naught
But water and stale bread. Ne'er speak, except
At prayers and grace ; and as to music, be
Content with ringing of the passing-bell
When souls do go to their account.

Mic. But if
The bells, that ring as readily for joy
As grief, should chance to ring a merry peal,
And they should drop the corse—

Wal. Then take the rope,
And hang thyself. I know no other way ;
To change thee.

Mic. Nay, I'll do some great feat yet.

Wal. You'll do some great feat ! Take me Gesler's castle !

Mic. Humph ! that would be a feat, indeed ! I'll do it !

Wal. You'll do it ? You'll get married, and have children,
And be a sober citizen, before
You pare your bread o' the crust ! You'll do it ? You'll
Do nothing ! Live until you are a hundred,
When death shall catch you, 'twill be laughing. Do it ?
Look grave, talk wise, live sober, thou wilt do
A harder thing, but that thou'lt never do. [*WALDMAN goes out.*]

Mic. Hard sentence, that ! Dame Nature ! gentle mother,
If thou hast made me of too rich a mould
To bring the common seed of life to fruit,
Is it a fault ? Kind Nature, I should lie
To say it was. Who would not have an eye
To see the sun, where others see a cloud ?
A skin so temper'd as to feel the rain,
Gave other men the ague, him refresh'd ?
A frame so vernal, as, in spite of snow,
To think it's genial summer all year round ;
And bask himself in bleak December's scowl,
While others sit and shiver o'er a hearth ?
His worship's self, I've heard, when he was young—
Some fifty years ago—was even such
A man ! Shall I upbraid my heart because
It hath been so intent to keep me in
An ample revenue of precious mirth,
It hath forgot to hoard the duller coin
That worldlings trade on ? No, not I, no more
Than I would empt my coffers of their gold,
Were they so furnish'd, to make room for brass ;
Or disenthroned the diamond of my ring—
Supposed the gemméd toy my finger wore—

To seat a sparkless pebble in its place!
 Yet here comes that, despite my wealth of mirth,
 Can make a beggar of me! Father, could
 You see me now, you'd find me *sans* a smile
 In all my jester's scrip!

*Enter GESLER'S Archers, escorting some Swiss Peasants, prisoners; they cross the Stage, and enter the Porch of the Castle,
 —TELL, at a short distance, following them.*

Tell. [To MICHAEL, who is looking after them as they enter the porch.] Do you know them?

Mic. No.

Tell. Nor I, thank Heaven! How like you that?

Mic. What?

Tell. That.

Mic. I like it not.

Tell. It might as well be you or I.

Mic. It might.

Tell. Do you live in Altorf?

Mic. Yes.

Tell. How go they on

In Altorf?

Mic. As you see. What was a sight
 A month ago, hath not the wonder now
 To draw them 'cross the threshold!

Tell. Would you like—

Mic. What wouldst thou say to me?

Tell. No matter, friend.

Something so slight, that in the thinking on't
 'Twas gone. The field of Grutli, Tell!—The hour's
 At hand. The spirits are expecting thee,
 Shall bring thy country back the times again
 She'd wonder this to see!

Mic. Stay, friend! a word.

If of my mind thou haply art, and think'st,
 When fortune will not make us theme of mirth,
 Ourselves may take the task in hand—

Tell. For mirth!—

Good day!

[Exit hastily.]

Mic. Acquaintance briefly broke as made!
 Take Gesler's castle, did my father say?
 Would I were well within the ramparts, and
 At large as now! I might do such a thing.
 Soft! Who comes here? Jagheli! Ha! a youth,
 That's tender as a love-sick damsel's sigh.
 What brings him sighing here? The Seneschal
 Has a fair daughter! Friend Jagheli, mind
 Thy secret. Half on't I have got already
 Without thy leave; the rest thyself shalt give me. *[Retires.]*

Enter JAGHELI and three Savoyards, with guitars.

Jag. You know the air, I'm sure. 'Tis very sweet:
 The young musician who composed it loved;

But 'twas a bootless flame! You must have heard
 The story? It is said he taught the lady,
 Who was of high degree, and made that strain
 To sing to her the love he dared not speak:—
 Don't you remember it? The sequel was
 A mournful one! The lady liked the strain,
 But did not see the tender minstrel's drift;
 And still she'd have him sing it, which he did
 With pining heart, o'er hopeless labour breaking!
 He sung it till he died!—and then, at last,
 The lady found his theme; when, strange to tell!
 With sweet contrition she dissolved away,
 And ne'er press'd bridal bed, save the cold one
 They made for her beside him! Draw thy hand
 Across the strings, and wake thy saddest chord:
 Perchance 'twill mind me of it. Thou hast hit it!
 See if the rhymes I've strung for it agree.

[MICHAEL listens at the back of the stage, unseen by
 JAGHELI and Savoyards.

AIR.—SAVOYARDS.

Lady, you're so heavenly fair!
 Though to love is madness, still
 Who beholds you can't forbear,
 But adores against his will.

Reason warms the heart in vain!
 Headlong passion won't obey!
 Hope's deceived, and sighs again!
 Love's abjured, yet holds its sway!

Mic. I pray you, have the ditty o'er again!
 Of all the strains that mewing minstrels sing,
 The lover's one for me! I could expire
 To hear a man, with bristles on his chin,
 Sing soft, with upturn'd eyes, and arch'd brows,
 Which talk of trickling tears, that never fall,
 And through the gamut whine his tender pain;
 While A and B and C such anguish speak,
 As never lover felt for mistress lost.
 Let's have the strain again!

Jag. To make thee mirth?
 When I'm thy lackey, honest Michael, I'll
 Provide thee music. There, with thanks to boot.

[Gives money to Savoyards, who go out.

I am not in thy pay.

Mic. No; but I mean
 To take thee into it. Wilt thou hire with me?
 Nay, hang thy coyness, man! Why, thinkest thou
 Thou art the only man in Altorf knows
 The Seneschal has a fair daughter?

Jag. Fair
 Or not, she's nought to me.

Mic. Indeed? Oh, then,
I'll tell her so!

Jag. You do not know her?

Mic. No;
For any profit it can bring to thee.

I pray thee, tell me, hath she not black teeth?

Jag. Thou know'st 'twould take the pearl to challenge them!

Mic. Her nose, I think, is somewhat set awry?

Jag. It sits like dignity on beauty's face!

Mic. Her hair is a dull black?

Jag. 'Tis shining gold!

Mic. Her figure's squat?

Jag. Betwixt the full and slim—

A mould where vie the richest charms of both!

Mic. Well, then, she hobbles in her gait?

Jag. She moves the light and flexile chamois—

If you could lend the chamois her beauty,

And add to that her modest stateliness!

Mic. You are a hopeful painter, sir! How well

You've drawn the daughter of the Seneschal!

Jag. Good Michael, thou'rt a jester; but thou'rt kind.

Thy mirth doth feast at every man's expense;

Yet with such grace of frankest confidence,

That none begrudge thee. Wilt thou be my friend?

I love the daughter of the Seneschal;

Help me to see her.

Mic. Come to church with me
Next Sunday.

Jag. I was there last Sunday, Michael—

And Sunday before last—and Sunday, too,

Preceding that. I ne'er miss church, for there

I see the daughter of the Seneschal.

Mic. How wondrously devout thou'rt grown of late!

They say there is a young man in the church

That has his prayers by heart—unless, indeed,

He reads them in a certain angel's face;

On which he looks, and says them word for word,

From end to end, nor e'er is seen to turn

To other page. Can it be thou they mean?

Thou'lt have a name for most rare sanctity!

Jag. Good Michael, canst thou help me?

Mic. If I knew
The lady.

Jag. What! dost thou not know her, then,

With what impediments is love environ'd!

Mic. Why, that's love's gain! It would not else be love.

Love's the impediments that lovers meet;

Or wherefore sing it, as your poets do,

A thing that lives in plots and stratagems?

They know not love who need but woo to wed,

But they who fain would wed, but dare not woo!

That's to be sound in love—to feel it from

The heart's deep centre to the fingers' ends !
 As sweetest fruit is that which is forbid,
 So fairest maid is she that is withheld.
 Whene'er I fall in love, I'll pick a maid
 Whose sire has vow'd her to a nunnery ;
 And she shall have, moreover, for her warders,
 Two maiden aunts, past wooing ; and to these
 I'll add an abigail, who has stood bridesmaid
 To twenty younger cousins, yet has ne'er
 Been ask'd herself ; and under her I'll set
 A male retainer of the family,
 For twenty years or more, as surly as
 A mastiff on the chain ; and, that my fair
 May lack no sweet provocative of love,
 Her tempting lattice shall be grated, and
 Her bower shall be surrounded with a wall
 Full ten feet high, on which an iron row
 Of forked shrubs shall stand and frown on me :
 And then I'll be a lover !

Jag. Show me how

Thou'dst win thy love by winning mine for me.

Mic. Hush ! here's the servant of the Seneschal ;
 A dog he sends on errands, without brains
 To take them half a yard ? What wouldst attempt
 To win the daughter of the Seneschal ?
 Wouldst enter Gesler's castle ?

Jag. Yes !

Mic. The man—

The very man for me !—*Aside, and mark !*

[They retire.]

Enter BRAUN, from Porch.

Bra. Three yards of buckram—Right ! Thread thereunto—
 But how much thread ?—A hank ? A hank's too much
 To sew three yards of buckram ! It must be
 A skein. A skein it is !—Right there. What next ?
 Twelve buckles with the straps—That is, twelve straps,
 Oh, very right ! In the fourth place, a score
 Of needles—Twenty needles to the score.
 I'm right again, by that ! And lastly—What
 Comes lastly ? Something is behind, I know,
 For I bethought me of my fingers, to

Enter Seneschal.

Remember, there were five things I should get ;
 And what's the fifth ? Or have I counted wrong ?
 There's buckram, one—thread, two—a skein of thread,
 Twelve buckles, and the straps—The straps and they
 Do go together—three : the fourth thing is
 A score of needles. There's my little finger
 Remaining yet. I'd give my hand to know
 For what that finger stands.

Sen. What stands it for ?

Bra. Dear master!

Sen. Dolt!

Bra. Kind master!

Sen. Jackanapes!

What stands it for?

Bra. I'll tell, but give me time.

Sen. What time? a day? a week? a month? a year?
Or till my daughter's dead?

Bra. I was to fetch
A leech to cure your daughter.

Sen. Wast thou so?

Wilt thou forget again?

[*Shaking his cane at him.*]

Bra. No, sir!

Sen. Thou wilt!

Or that, or something else.

Bra. Indeed, sir, no!

Sen. Then say thy errand o'er again! Say't out!
See thou are right in every tittle on't,
Or look to't. Now!

Bra. Three yards of buckram—

Sen. No!

Begin with the leech.

Bra. I set the leech against

My little finger, sir.

Sen. Begin with him!

Bra. My little finger, sir, stands for the leech.

Sen. I say, begin with the leech!

Bra. I will! I will!

Well, then, the leech. I go to bring him to
My lady, your daughter; for she's sick.

Sen. Go on.

Mic. [*Aside to JAGHELI.*] Jagheli, thou must play the leech!

Away!

[*JAGHELI goes out.*]

Sen. Go on.

Bra. Three yards of buckram, I'm to fetch;
Twelve buckles and the straps; and to conclude,
A score of needles.

Sen. [*Striking him.*] Rascal, where's the thread
To sew the buckram? Bring'st thou needles, fool!
And not the thread? Eh, starting? Eh? Wilt sew
The buckram without thread?

Mic. [*Coming forward, and striking him.*] Eh? rascal! Eh?
Heard ever mortal man the like of this?

Eh, platter! tankard! nightcap! good for naught
Except to eat, and drink, and sleep! Forget
Thy errand! Serve thy worthy master thus!

Thy patient master! thy kind master!—Get

Three meals a day, thy lodging, clothing, hire,

And civil words to boot; and yet not be

Trustworthy to the fetching of a skein

Of thread! Eh! Stomach!—Master Seneschal,

I'll run your errand straight. A leech; three yards

Of buckram; thread; a skein; a gross of needles—
Bring needles without thread! Eh? gullet!—and
A dozen buckles with the straps.

Sen. Good lad!

What art thou, prithee?

Mic. Sir, a sober youth,

Son to a worthy burgher of the town;
Was brought up in a monastery, has
Read Greek and Latin, knows to cast accounts,
And writes a hand as good as any clerk's
In Altorf, sir, with sundry other gifts.
As people say, but which 'twere not discreet
In me to speak of.

Sen. Why, a modest lad.

Dost want a service?

Mic. Not as varlets want

A service, sir, who let their duty out
For coin; I have enough: but I would serve
For love at any time, especially
The Seneschal of Altorf. Shall I run
Your errand?

Sen. Why, a model of a youth!

Thou shalt. Give him the money, sir.

Bra. The money!

Mic. Ay, Sit-over-meals! can I provide the things
Without the money?

Sen. Rascal, where's the money?

Bra. I put it in this pocket, sir, I'm sure
I put it in this pocket!

[*Feeling for it.*]

Sen. Empty it, sir.

Mic. [*Searching the pocket.*] What's this?
A crust of cheese! O ne'er-content!

Sen. Well! where is it?

Bra. Or could it be in this?

Sen. Out with't.

Mic. [*Searching the other pocket.*] What's here? a head of
garlic, and

A capon's leg! O cormorant!

Sen. The money!

Bra. Yes, sir!

Sen. Thy vest, try that! The money, sirrah!

Bra. Good sir, this instant!

Sen. Instant, dog! Wilt swear
Thou'lt find it in an hour?

Mic. Or in a day.

Eh? lack-grace! knave! incorrigible knave,
To chafe so sweet a temper'd gentleman—
What's that thou keep'st the last three fingers of
Thy careful hand upon?

Bra. The money!—There's

The money. [*Opens his hand slowly, and shows the money.*]

Sen. Give it him!

Mic. A patch, a rag,
 The tatter of a serving man! To carry
 His master's money in his greasy hand,
 Or think of thrusting it into his poke—
 Receptacle of musty eatables—
 Cheese, garlic, scraps of meat, to wit; instead
 Of lodging't in a safe and comely purse.
 I'll run your errand, sir. Three yards of buckram;
 A skein of thread; a score of needles, and
 Twelve buckles with straps; not to forget
 To bring a leech to cure your daughter, sir.
 A turnspit cur—I'll run your errand, sir!
[*They go out severally.*]

SCENE II.—*The Field of Grutli.—A Lake and Mountains.*

Enter TELL, with a long bow.

Tell. Ye crags and peaks, I'm with you once again!
 I hold to you the hands you first beheld,
 To show they still are free. Methinks I hear
 A spirit in your echoes answer me,
 And bid your tenant welcome home, again!
 Hail!—Hail! O sacred forms, how proud you look!
 How high you lift your heads into the sky!
 How huge you are! how mighty, and how free!
 How do you look, for all your baréd brows,
 More gorgeously majestic than kings
 Whose loaded coronets exhaust the mine!
 Ye are the things that tower—that shine—whose smile
 Makes glad—whose frown is terrible—whose forms,
 Robed or unrobed, do all the impress wear
 Of awe divine—whose subject never kneels
 In mockery, because it is your boast
 To keep him free! Ye guards of liberty,
 I'm with you once again!—I call to you
 With all my voice! I hold my hands to you
 To show they still are free! I rush to you
 As though I could embrace you!

Erni [*without*]. William! William!

Tell. [*Looks out.*] Here, Erni, here!

Enter ERNI.

Erni. Thou'rt sure to keep the time,
 That comest before the hour.

Tell. The hour, my friend,
 Will soon be here. O, when will liberty
 Be here? My Erni, that's my thought, which still
 I find beside. Scaling yonder peak,
 I saw an eagle wheeling near its brow:
 O'er the abyss his broad expanded wings

Lay calm and motionless upon the air,
 As if he floated there without their aid,
 By the sole act of his unlorded will,
 That buoy'd him proudly up. Instinctively
 I strung my bow; yet kept he rounding still
 His airy circle, as in the delight
 Of measuring the ample range beneath,
 And round about, absorb'd, he heeded not
 The death that threaten'd him!—I could not shoot!—
 'Twas liberty. I turn'd the shaft aside,
 And let him soar away!

Verner [without]. Tell!—Tell!

Enter VERNER.

Tell. Here, Verner!

Furst [without]. Tell!

Enter FURST.

Tell. Here, friends!—Well met!—Do we go on?

Ver. We do.

Tell. Then you can reckon on the friends you named?

Ver. On every man of them.

Furst. And I on mine.

Erni. Not one I sounded, but doth rate his blood
 As water in the cause! Then fix the day
 Before we part.

Ver. No, Erni: rather wait

For some new outrage to amaze and rouse
 The common mind, which does not brood so much
 On wrongs gone by, as it doth rankle with
 The sense of present ones.

Tell. [*To Verner.*] I wish with Erni,
 But I think with thee. Yet when I ask myself
 On whom the wrong shall light for which we wait—
 Whose vineyard they'll uproot—whose flocks they'll ravage—
 Whose threshold they'll profane—whose hearth pollute—
 Whose roof they'll fire?—When this I ask myself;
 And think upon the blood of pious sons,
 The tears of venerable fathers, and
 The shrieks of mothers, fluttering round their spoil'd
 And nestless young—I almost take the part
 Of generous indignation, that o'erboils
 At such expense to wait on sober prudence!

Furst. Yet it is best.

Tell. On that we're all agreed!

Who fears the issue when the day shall come?

Ver. Not I!

Furst. Nor I!

Erni. Nor I!

Tell. I'm not the man

To mar this harmony—Nor I, no more
 Than any of you! You commit to me

The warning of the rest. Remember, then,
 My dagger sent to any one of you—
 As time may press—is word enough. The others
 I'll see myself. Our course is clear.—Dear Erni,
 Remember me to Melchtal.—Furst, provide
 What store you can of arms. Do you the same.

[To ERNI and VERNER.

The next aggression of the tyrant is
 The downfall of his power?—Remember me
 To Melchtal, Erni:—to my father. Tell him
 He has a son that was not born to him!
 Farewell!—When next we meet upon this theme,
 All Switzerland shall witness what we do!

[They go out severally.

SCENE III.—*A Chamber in the inside of the Castle, with
 an open window.*

Enter ANNELI and AGNES.

Ann. Art sure thou heard'st him?

Agn. Do I hear you, coz?

As sure did I hear him, and see him, too,
 From yonder casement.

Ann. Sweet! look out again!
 Perhaps he lingers there.

Agn. I wonder, cousin,
 You'd send another's eyes to look for that
 You'd give your own to see! You silly thing!
 Look out yourself. [They go to the window.

Ann. Ah, sweet! look out for me!
 For should he not be there, 'twill pain me less
 To miss him by your eyes than by my own.
 In sooth, you've set my heart a beating so,
 I know not, coz, if I have ears or eyes
 To see or hear him!

Agn. Well, lend me your hand,
 To help me up. [ANNELI assists AGNES to climb up to the
casement.] Dear love, you tremble so
 You'll pull me down! Oh, silly, silly thing,
 To be so scared at what you so desire!

Ann. Fear, coz, you know, is offspring to desire.
Agn. A gentle mother to a froward child!
 Love finds out wonders, coz; but find not I
 The thing I look for. No; he is not there.

Ann. Nay, look again.

Agn. I cannot make him there
 By looking, coz—Could you?

Ann. I would I could!
 I'd look my eyes blind till he came.

Agn. Indeed!
And see him then?

Ann. And see him then! The thought
That I might see him then would bring me back
My sight.

Agn. It would! oh, wonder-working love!
I would not have you risk your sight, dear coz;
But I would have you try another thing,
You'd run no risk to lose, unless they wrong
Our sex, who say its voice is lasting as
'Tis sweet. Sing, coz! He'll hear and come. Come, sing.

Ann. Sing, coz!

Agn. Ay, sing!

Ann. Am I not sick?—confined
To my own chamber—sick, coz—doubly sick—
For hate of one I would not wed; for love
Of one I would? Have they not sent just now
To bring the leech to see me? And you'd have
Me sing! Oh, thoughtless coz!

Agn. For too much thought!
Never at rest to do my cousin good.
Did I not bid thee hate the Castellain,
When thou didst say thou couldst not love him, coz?
Did I not bid thee love the burgher's son,
When thou didst say thou ne'er couldst love but him?
And when thy father swore he'd have thee wed,
And thou didst vow thou'dst sooner die than wed!
Did I not bid thee, coz, fall sick at once,
And die? And now, when to the casement comes
The man thou'dst wish the casement, door, and all,
Were open to; would I not have thee sing,
To let him know there's neither bolt nor bar?
He'd wish to draw in love and honesty,
You'd wish him not? But, cousin, as you say
You're sick, and as for your sweet health 'tis good
That others think so, I'll try and e'en
Sing for you, coz.

AIR.—AGNES.

O well you ride, Sir Knight, O well
Your courser you bestride;
But you'd ride better could you tell
Who sees you as you ride—
Not your lady, Sir Knight—not your lady, Sir Knight,
But her father, who wishes you far out of sight.

O well you sing, Sir Knight, O well
Your ditty you rehearse;
But you'd sing better could you tell
Who lists your tender verse.—
Not your lady, Sir Knight—not your lady, Sir Knight,
But your rival, who's fretting and fuming for spite.

O well you climb, Sir Knight, O well
 You climb to your lady's bower ;
 But you'd climb better could you tell
 Who sees you scale the tower.
 'Tis your lady, Sir Knight—'tis your lady, Sir Knight,
 Who wishes the tower was not half the height.

O fast you fly, Sir Knight, O fast
 You urge your laden steed ;
 But you'd ride slower, if you guess'd
 How little is the need.
 They have turn'd to the left—you've taken the right,
 And you should be wedding, not riding, Sir Knight.

Enter the SENESCHAL.

Sen. How now! What's this? Ha! Singing at the
 casement?

Agn. To please my cousin, sir.

Sen. How? Anneli!

Agn. I coax'd her from her chamber. Change, they say,
 Is physic to the sick, when medicine
 More costly's virtueless!

Sen. And who made thee
 A doctor?

Agn. Nature!

Sen. Nature? Yes, I doubt not
 'Twas nature taught thee change was good! it is
 Thy sex's universal remedy—
 Physic they swallow without making faces,
 Anneli!

Ann. Sir?

Sen. Art better, girl?

Ann. No, sir.

Sen. Better or worse I'll have thee soon. The leech
 Will straight be here—He should be coming now.
 Thy chamber!

Ann. [*To AGNES.*] Should he find I am not ill!

Agn. He'll find he's not a ducat richer by it,
 So never fear!—He'll find thee very ill.
 If thou'rt not well until he makes thee so,
 Thou shalt be sick, coz, to thy heart's content!

[*ANNELI goes out.*]

Sen. Agnes.

Agn. Yes, sir.

Sen. What says thy cousin?

Agn. Nought.

Sen. What didst thou say to her?

Agn. I told her, sir,
 To keep her heart up, and not fear the leech.

Sen. Not fear the leech!

Agn. E'er since you spoke of him,
 She has done nothing, sir, but talk of lancets,
 Caustics, and blisters; powders, nauseous draughts,

With fifty other shocking things, that much
I fear me, sir, she will feign well, to cheat
The leech.

Sen. Ha! think'st thou so?

Agn. I'm sure on't, sir.

She has been practising e'er since you named him.

Sen. I thought she look'd much better!

Agn. Better, sir!

She's worse, much worse! The mischief's inward, sir.
In short, she's dying—dying, sir: and yet
She'd sooner die than undergo the leech.

Sen. Ne'er fear, ne'er fear! She shall not cheat him so.
I'll not believe him, though he says she's well.
I'll make him think her ill. No drug he has
But shall be fully tried on her. His pills,
Emplastrums, ointments, julaps, cataplasms,
Shall take their turn with her; and if these fail,
We'll bring his knives and lancets to her; nor,
When all is done, shall he give o'er, until
She's well again, and weds the Castellain!

Enter BRAUN.

Braun. The leech is here, sir.

Enter MICHAEL, with JAGHELI, disguised as a Leech.

Mic. Sir, I've brought the gentleman,
And all the articles you bade me get.

Sen. Good lad, and active!

Welcome, sir! Methinks

He's very young. Art sure he is a leech?

Mic. A leech, sir! Ay, and such a one!—There's not
His fellow to be found in Altorf, sir.

Remember, sir, it is the use of time,
Not time itself, that's written in our looks.

Forty is younger far than twenty, sir,
When that sees husbanding, but this does not.

But never take my word for't! Only try

His lancet—Do, sir—'Tis miraculous

How skilfully he can phlebotomize.

No scratch, sir, prick of a pin, or flea-bite, sir,
But real blade-work. Let him bleed you, sir!

Sen. On second looks, methinks he's not
So young.

Mic. Past forty, sir.

Sen. Past forty! Come,
Take ten from that.

Mic. Ten, sir!—I pray you, lady,

Provide a ribbon for the Seneschal,
And something soft to make a compress of. [*AGNES goes out.*]

Ten do you say, sir? Ten? Ten years ago
He bled and blister'd me—I'll show you, sir,
The mark of his lancet.

Sen. Nay, good youth, don't strip
Thy sleeve!

Mic. Strip yours, then, sir, and let him try
His skill upon you. Fetch a basin, rascal! [*BRAUN goes out.*
'Twill do you good, sir. For a healthy man,
You're over-full of blood. To lose a little
Will benefit you much. Your cheek's a tint
Too florid, sir. There's indigestion in't,
Which breeds vertigo; for preventing which [*Getting a chair.*
There's nothing like the breathing of a vein.

Re-enter AGNES, with a ribbon, &c.; BRAUN, with a basin.

Mic. Sit down, sir.

Sen. Nay, good lad!—

[*Sits.*

Mic. Good master leech,
Your case of instruments, wherein you store
Your lancets, scalpels, and your scarifiers—
The Seneschal wants bleeding.

Sen. No, no, no! [*Rises up and runs.*
I am content that he's a man of skill.

Mic. Just let him take a single ounce of blood,
To see how he can use a lancet, sir.

Sen. I tell thee, no!—I'm sure he is a leech.—

Mic. But half an ounce.

Sen. Good youth, I would not wrong
The worthy man, by asking him to take
A single drop. I'm sure he is a leech!
One needs but look at him to know that he
Can bleed; and for his years, to see him close,
He's far from young; past forty, at the least.
Good sir, put up your case of instruments,
And come along with me to see my daughter.
And, Agnes, give this youth a cup of wine,
With what you have that's best, to relish it.
A most sagacious leech, I'm sure!—A leech
Than whom none ever better look'd his calling. [*They go out.*

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*TELL'S Cottage on the right of a Mountain—a distant view of a Lake, backed by Mountains of stupendous height, their tops covered with snow, and lighted at the very points by the rising Sun, the rest of the distance being yet in shade—on one side a Vineyard.*

Enter EMMA, from the Cottage.

Emma. O, the fresh morning! Heaven's kind messenger,
That never empty-handed comes, to those

Who know to use its gifts.—Praise be to him
 Who loads it still, and bids it constant run
 The errand of his bounty!—Praise be to him!
 We need his care that on the mountain's cliff
 Lodge by the storm, and cannot lift our eyes,
 But piles on piles of everlasting snows,
 O'erhanging us, remind us of his mercy!

ALBERT appears on an eminence.

Alb. My mother!

Emma. Albert!

Alb. [*Descending.*] Bless thee!

Emma. Bless thee, Albert!

How early were you up?

Alb. Before the sun.

Emma. Ay, strive with him. He never lies a-bed
 When it is time to rise. He ever is
 The constant st workman, that goes through his task,
 And shows us how to work by setting to't
 With smiling face; for labour's light as ease
 To him that toils with cheerfulness. Be like
 The sun.

Alb. What you would have me like, I'll be like,
 As far as will to labour join'd, can make me.

Emma. Well said, my boy! Knelt you when you got up
 To-day?

Alb. I did; and do so every day!

Emma. I know you do! And think you, when you kneel,
 To whom you kneel?

Alb. To HIM who made me, mother.

Emma. And in whose name?

Alb. The name of Him who died
 For me and all men, that all men and I,
 By trust in him, might live.

Emma. Remember that!
 Forget all things but that—remember that!
 'Tis more than friends or fortune; clothing, food;
 All things of earth; yea, life itself. It is
 To live when these are gone, where they are nought
 With God!—My son, remember that!

Alb. I will!

Emma. You have been early up, when I, that play'd
 The sluggard, in comparison, am up
 Full early; for the highest peaks alone,
 As yet, behold the sun. Now tell me what
 You ought to ponder, when you see the sun
 So shining on the peak?

Alb. That as the peak
 Feels not the pleasant sun, or feels it least!
 So they, who highest stand in fortune's smile,
 Are gladden'd by it least, or not at all!

Emma. The lesson that remember'd pays the teacher!
And what's the profit you should turn this to?

Alb. Rather to place my good in what I have,
Than think it worthless, wishing to have more;
For more is not more happiness, so oft
As less.

Emma. I'm glad you husband what you learn.
That is the lesson of content, my son;
He who finds which, has all—who misses—nothing!

Alb. Content is a good thing.

Emma. A thing, the good
Alone can profit by.

Alb. My father's good.

Emma. What say'st thou, boy?

Alb. I say my father's good.

Emma. Yes; he is good! What then?

Alb. I do not think
He is content—I'm sure he's not content;
Nor would I be content, were I a man,
And Gesler seated on the rock of Altorf!
A man may lack content, and yet be good.

Emma. I did not say *all* good men find content.—
I would be busy; leave me.

Alb. You're not angry?

Emma. No, no, my boy.

Alb. You'll kiss me?

Emma. Will I not!

The time will come you will not ask your mother
To kiss you!

Alb. Never!

Emma. Not when you're a man?

Alb. I would not be a man to see that time:
I'd rather die, now that I am a child,
Than live to be a man, and not love you!

Emma. Live—live to be a man, and love your mother!

[*They embrace—ALBERT runs off into the cottage.*]

Why should my heart sink? 'tis for this we rear them!

Cherish their tiny limbs; pine if a thorn
But mar their tender skin; gather them to us
Closer than miser hugs his bag of gold;
Bear more for them than slave, who makes his flesh
A casket for the rich purloined gem—

To send them forth into a wintry world
To brave its flaws and tempests!—They must go;
Far better, then, they go with hearty will!
Be that my consolation.—Nestling as

He is, he is the making of a bird
Will own no cowering wing. 'Twas fine—'Twas fine
To see my eaglet, on the verge o' the nest,
Ruffling himself at sight of the huge gulf
He feels anon he'll have the wing to soar!

Re-enter ALBERT from the Cottage, with a bow and arrows, and a rude target, which he sets up during the first lines, laying his bow and quiver on the ground.

What have you there?

Alb. My bow and arrows, mother.

Emma. When will you use them like your father, boy?

Alb. Some time, I hope.

Emma. You brag! There's not an archer

In all Helvetia can compare with him!

Alb. But I'm his son; and when I am a man,

I may be like him. Mother, do I brag

To think I some time may be like my father?

If so, then is it he that teaches me;

For ever as I wonder at his skill,

He calls me boy, and says I must do more

When I become a man!

Emma. May you be such

A man as he!—If Heaven wills, better!—I'll

Not quarrel with its work; yet 'twill content me

If you are only such a man!

Alb. I'll show you

How I can shoot. [*Shoots.*] Look, mother! there's within

An inch!

Emma. O fy! it wants a hand. [*Going into the cottage.*

Alb. A hand's

An inch for me. I'll hit it yet. Now for it! [*Shoots again.*

[While ALBERT continues to shoot, the light gradually approaches the base of the mountains in the distance, and spreads itself over the lake and valley.]

Enter TELL, watching ALBERT some time in silence.

Tell. That's scarce a miss that comes so near the mark!

Well aim'd, young archer! With what ease he draws

The bow! To see those sinews, who'd believe

Such vigour lodged in them? Well aim'd again!

There plays the skill will thin the chamois' herd,

And bring the lammer-geyer from the cloud

To earth. Perhaps do greater feats—Perhaps

Make man its quarry, when he dares to tread

Upon his fellow-man! That little arm,

His mother's palm can span, may help, anon,

To pull a sinewy tyrant from his seat,

And from their chains a prostrate people lift

To liberty! I'd be content to die,

Living to see that day!—What, Albert!

Alb. Ah!—

My father!

[Running to TELL, who embraces him.]

Emma. [*Running from the cottage.*] William!—Welcome, welcome, William!

I did not look for you till noon, and thought

How long 'twould be ere noon would come! You're come—

How soon 'twill now be here and gone ! O William !
 When you are absent from me, I count time
 By minutes ; which, when you are here, flies by
 In hours, that are not noted till they're out !
 Now this is happiness ! Joy's doubly joy
 That comes before the time—It is a debt,
 Paid ere 'tis due, which fills the owner's heart
 With gratitude, and yet 'tis but his own !
 And are you well ? and has the chase proved good ?
 How has it fared with you ? Come in ; I'm sure
 You want refreshment, William.

Tell. No ; I shared

A herdsman's meal, upon whose lonely chalet
 I chanced to light. I've had bad sport ! My track
 Lay with the wind, which to the startlish game
 Betray'd me still. One only prize ; and that
 I gave mine humble host. You raise the bow
 Too fast. [*To ALBERT, who has returned to his practice.*]

Bring't slowly to the eye— [ALBERT shoots.

You've miss'd.

How often have you hit the mark to-day ?

Alb. Not once yet.

Tell. You're not steady. I perceived

You waver'd now. Stand firm !—Let every limb
 Be braced as marble, and as motionless.

Stand like the sculptor's statue on the gate
 Of Altorf, that looks life, yet neither breathes
 Nor stirs. [ALBERT shoots.] That's better !

Emma. William ! William !—O !

To be the parents of a boy like that !—

Why speak you not—and wherefore do you sigh ?

What's in your heart to keep the transport out

That fills up mine, when looking on our child,

Till it o'erflows mine eye ?

[ALBERT shoots.

Tell. You've miss'd again !

Dost see the mark ? Rivet your eye to it !

There let it stick, fast as the arrow would,

Could you but send it there !

Emma. Why, William, don't

You answer me ?

[ALBERT shoots.

Tell. Again ! How would you fare,

Suppose a wolf should cross your path, and you

Alone, with but your bow, and only time

To fix a single arrow ? 'Twould not do

To miss the wolf ! You said, the other day,

Were you a man, you'd not let Gesler live—

'Twas easy to say that. Suppose you, now,

Your life or his depended on that shot !—

Take care ! That's Gesler ! Now for liberty !

Right to the tyrant's heart ! [ALBERT shoots.] Well done,
 my boy !

Come here !—Now, Emma, I will answer you :

Do I not love you ? Do I not love our child ?
 Is not that cottage dear to me, where I
 Was born ? How many acres would I give
 That little vineyard for, which I have watch'd
 And tended since I was a child ? Those crags
 And peaks—what spired city would I take
 To live in, in exchange for them ?—Yet what
 Are these to me ? What is this boy to me ?
 What art thou, Emma, to me—when a breath
 Of Gesler's can take all !

Emma. O, William, think
 How little is that all to him—too little
 For Gesler, sure, to take. Bethink, thee, William,
 We have no treasure.

Tell. Have we not ? Have we
 No treasure ? How ! No treasure ? What !
 Have we not liberty ?—that precious ore,
 That pearl, that gem, the tyrant covets most ;
 Yet can't enjoy himself—for which he drains
 His coffers of their coin—his land of blood ;
 Goes without sleep—pines himself sallow-pale—
 Yea, makes a pawn of his own soul—lacks ease—
 Frets, till the bile gnaws appetite away—
 Forgets both heaven and hell, only to strip
 The wearer of it ! Emma, we have that,
 And that's enough for Gesler !

Emma. Then, indeed,
 My William, we have much to fear !

Tell. We have ;
 And best it is we know how much. Then, Emma,
 Make up thy mind, wife ! Make it up ! Remember
 What wives and mothers on these very hills
 Once breathed the air you breathe. Helvetia
 Hath chronicles, the masters of the world,
 As they were call'd—the Romans—kept for her ;
 And in those chronicles I've heard 'tis writ—
 And praise set down by foes must needs be true—
 'Tis writ, I say, that when the Rhetians—
 They were the early tenants of those hills—
 Withstood the lust of Roman tyranny,
 With Claudius Drusus, and a certain Nero,
 Sons-in-law of Octavius Cæsar, at
 Its head—the Rhetian women—when the men
 By numbers overmatch'd at last gave way—
 Seeing that liberty was gone, threw life
 And nature, too, as worthless, after it ;
 Rush'd through the gaping ranks of them that fled,
 And on the dripping weapons of the red
 Resistless van impaled themselves and children !

Emma. O, William !

Tell. Emma, let the boy alone !
 Don't clasp him so—'Twill soften him ! Go, sir !

See if the valley sends us visitors
To-day. Some friend, perchance, may need thy guidance.
Away! [*ALBERT goes out.*] He's better from thee, Emma!
The time

Is come, a mother on her breast should fold
Her arms, as they had done with such endearments,
And bid her children go from her, to hunt
For danger—which will presently hunt them—
The less to heed it!

Emma. William, you are right.
The task you set me I will try to do.
I would not live myself to be a slave—
I would not live to be the dam of one!
No! woman as I am, I would not, William!
Then choose my course for me. Whate'er it is,
I will say, ay, and do it, too—Suppose
To dress my little stripling for the war,
And take him by the hand, and lead him to't!
Yes, I would do it at thy bidding, William,
Without a tear—I say that I would do it—
Though, now I only talk of doing it,
I can't help shedding one!

[*Weeps.*]

Tell. Did I not choose thee
From out the fairest of the maids of Uri,
Less that in beauty thou didst them surpass,
Than that thy soul that beauty overmatch'd?
Why rises on thy matron cheek that blush,
Mantling it fresh as in thy virgin morn,
But that I did so? Do I wonder, then,
To find thee equal to the task of virtue,
Although a hard one? No, I wonder not!
Why should I, Emma, make thy heart acquainted
With ills I could shut out from it—rude guests
For such a home! Here, only, we have had
Two hearts; in all things else—in love, in faith,
In hope, in joy—that never had but one!
But henceforth we must have but one, here, also.

Emma. O, William, you have wrong'd me—kindly wrong'd
me!

When ever yet was happiness the test
Of love in man or woman? Who'd not hold
To that which must advantage him? Who'd not
Keep promise to a feast, or mind his pledge
To share a rich man's purse? There's not a churl,
However base, but might be thus approved
Of most unswerving constancy. But that
Which loosens churls, ties friends! or changes them,
Only to stick the faster. William! William!
That man knew never yet the love of woman,
Who never had an ill to share with her!

Tell. Not even to know that would I in so
Ungentle partnership engage thee, Emma,

If will could help it; but necessity,
 The master yet of will, how strong soe'er,
 Compels me, prove thee. When I wedded thee,
 The land was free! O! with what pride I used
 To walk these hills, and look up to my God,
 And bless him that it was so! It was free!—
 From end to end, from cliff to lake 'twas free!—
 Free as our torrents are that leap our rocks,
 And plough our valleys, without asking leave;
 Or as our peaks that wear their caps of snow,
 In very presence of the regal sun!
 How happy was I in it then! I loved
 Its very storms! Yes, Emma, I have sat
 In my boat at night, when, midway o'er the lake,
 The stars went out, and down the mountain gorge
 The wind came roaring—I have sat and eyed
 The thunder breaking from his cloud, and smiled
 To see him shake his lightnings o'er my head,
 And think I had no master save his own!
 You know the jutting cliff round which a track
 Up hither winds, whose base is but the brow
 To such another one, with scanty room
 For two a-breast to pass? O'ertaken there
 By the mountain blast, I've laid me flat, along;
 And while gust follow'd gust, more furiously,
 As if to sweep me o'er the horrid brink,
 And I have thought of other lands, whose storms
 Are summer flaws to those of mine, and just
 Have wish'd me there—the thought that mine was free
 Has check'd that wish, and I have raised my head,
 And cried in thralldom to that furious wind,
 Blow on! This is the land of liberty!

Emma. I almost see thee on that fearful pass,
 And yet, so seeing thee, I have a feeling
 Forbids me wonder that thou didst so.

Tell. 'Tis

A feeling must not breathe where Gesler breathes,
 But may within these arms! List, Emma, list!
 A league is made to pull the tyrant down!
 E'en from his seat upon the rock of Altorf.
 Four hearts have staked their blood upon the cast,
 And mine is one of them.

Emma. I did not start!—

Tell me more, William!

Tell. I will tell thee all.—

Alb. [without]. O, father!

Old Melchtal [without]. Tell!—Tell!—William!

Emma. Don't you know
 That voice!

Enter OLD MELCHTAL, blind, led by ALBERT.

Old M. Where art thou, William?

Tell. Who is it?

Emma. Do you not know him?

Tell. No!—It cannot be
The voice of Melchtal!

Alb. Father, it is Melchtal!

Emma. What ails you, Tell?

Alb. O, father, speak to him!

Emma. What passion shakes you thus?

Tell. His eyes!—Where are they?

Melchtal has eyes.

Old M. Tell! Tell!

Tell. 'Tis Melchtal's voice.

Where are his eyes? Have they put out his eyes?

Has Gesler turn'd the little evening of

The old man's life to night, before its time?

To such black night as sees not with the day

All round it! Father, speak! Pronounce the name

Of Gesler!

Old M. Gesler.

Tell. Gesler has torn out

The old man's eyes! Support thy mother! Erni?

Where's Erni? Where's thy son? Is he alive?

And are his father's eyes torn out?

Old M. He lives, my William,

But knows it not.

Tell. When he shall know it! O! Heavens,

When he shall know it!—I am not thy son,

Yet—

Emma. [*Alarmed at his increasing vehemence.*] William!—
William!

Alb. Father!

Tell. Could I find

Something to tear—to rend, were worth it!—something

Most ravenous and bloody!—something like

Gesler!—a wolf;—No, no! A wolf's a lamb

To Gesler! It is a natural hunger makes

The wolf a savage; and, savage as he is,

Yet with his kind he gently doth consort.

'Tis but his lawful prey he tears; and that

He finishes—not mangles, and then leaves

To live! I'd let the wolf go free, for Gesler!—Water!

My tongue cleaves to my roof!

Old M. What ails thee, William?

I pray thee, William, let me hear thy voice!

That's not thy voice!

Tell. I cannot speak to thee!

Emma. [*Returning with a vessel of water.*] Here,
William!

Tell. Emma!

Emma. Drink!

Tell. I cannot drink!

Emma. Your eyes are fix'd.

Tell. Melchtal!—He has no eyes! [*Bursts into tears.*
The poor old man! [*Falls on MELCHTAL'S neck.*

Old M. I feel thee, Tell! I care not
That I have lost my eyes! I feel thy tears—
They're more to me than eyes! When I had eyes,
I never knew thee, William, as I know
Thee now, without. I do not want my eyes!

Tell. How came it, father? briefly, father!—quick
And briefly! Action! action! I'm in such glee
For work—so eager to be doing—have
Such stomach for a task, I've scarcely patience
To wait to know what 'tis—Here, here: sit down.
Now, father! [*OLD MELCHTAL sits down.—TELL kneels.*

Old M. Yesterday, when I and Erni
Went to the field, to bring our harvest home,
Two soldiers of the tyrant's came upon us,
And, without cause alleged, or interchange
Of word, proceeded to unyoke the oxen.

Tell. Go on!

Old M. As one stunn'd by a thunder-clap
Stands sudden still, nor for a while bethinks him
Of taking shelter from the storm; so we,
Confounded by an act so bold, a while
Look'd on in helpless silence; till at length
Erni, as sudden as the hurricane,
That lays the oak uprooted, ere you see
Its branches quiver, bounding on the spoilers,
Wrench'd from their grasp the yoke, and would have
smote

Them dead, had they not ta'en to instant flight!

Tell. Did he pursue them?

Old M. No; I threw myself
Between!

Tell. Why didst thou save them?

Old M. 'Twas my son
I saved! I clasp'd his knees—I calm'd his rage,
I forced him from me to the caverns of
Mount Faigel, William, till the tyrant's wrath
Might cool, or be diverted. 'Twas my son
I saved: for, scarcely was he out of sight,
And I within my cottage, when the cries
Of Gesler's bands beset it, calling for
The blood of Erni! William, he was safe!—
Clear of their fangs! My son was safe! O, think—
Think, William, what I felt to see his lair—
His very lair—beset, and know my boy,—
My lion boy, was safe! Enough! They seized me,
And dragg'd me before Gesler.

Tell. Say no more!

His life cost you your eyes! 'Tis worth a pair
Of eyes, but not your eyes, old man! No, no;
He would have given it ten times over for

But one of them. But one? But for a hair
O' the lash! My bow and quiver! He was by?

Old M. Was by.

Tell. More arrows for my quiver.

And looking on?

Old M. And looking on.

Tell. [*Putting the arrows into his quiver.*] 'Twill do!

He would dine after that, and say a grace!

He would! To tear a man's eyes out, and then

Thank God!—My staff!—He'd have his wine, too. How

The man could look at it, and drink it off,

And not grow sick at the colour on't! Enough;

Put by the rest. [*To EMMA, who has brought him a bundle of arrows.*] I'll grow more calm!

My flask—I want it fill'd; and put provision

Into my pouch—I thank thee for that look!

Now seem'st thou like some kind o'er-seeing angel,

Smiling as he prepares the storm, that, while it

Shakes the earth, and makes its tenants pale,

Doth smite a pestilence. Thou wouldst not stay me?

Emma. No!

Tell. Nor thy boy, if I required his service?

Emma. No, William!

Tell. Make him ready, Emma.

Old M. No!

Not Albert, William!

Emma. Yes; even Albert, father.

Thy cap and wallet, boy—thy mountain staff,—

Where hast thou laid it? Find it—haste! Don't keep

Thy father waiting. He is ready, William!

Tell. Well done—Well done! I thank you, love—I thank you!

Now mark me, Albert! Dost thou fear the snow,

The ice-field, or the hail-flaw? Carest thou for

The mountain mist, that settles on the peak

When thou'rt upon it? Dost thou tremble at

The torrent roaring from the deep ravine,

Along whose shaking ledge thy track doth lie?

Or faint'st thou at the thunder-clap, when on

The hill thou art o'ertaken by the cloud,

And it doth burst around thee? Thou must travel

All night!

Alb. I'm ready. Say all night again.

Tell. The mountains are to cross; for thou must reach
Mount Faigel by the dawn!

Alb. Not sooner shall

The dawn be there than I.

Tell. Heaven speeding thee!

Alb. Heaven speeding me!

Tell. Show me thy staff.—Art sure

O' the point? I think 'tis loose. No—Stay—'Twill do!

Caution is speed when danger's to be pass'd.
Examine well the crevice—Do not trust
The snow! 'Tis well there is a moon to-night.
You're sure o' the track?

Alb. Quite sure.

Tell. The buskin of
That leg's untied. Stoop down and fasten it.
You know the point where you must round the cliff?

Alb. I do.

Tell. Thy belt is slack—Draw't tight.
Erni is in Mount Faigel. Take this dagger,
And give it him. You know its caverns well.
In one of them you'll find him. Bid thy mother
Farewell. Come, boy! We go a mile together.
Father, thy hand. [*Shakes hands with Old Melchtal.*]

Old M. How firm thy grasp is, William!

Tell. There is a resolution in it, father,
Will keep.

Old M. I cannot see thine eye, but I know
How it looks!

Tell. I'll tell thee how it looks. List, father,
List. Father, thou shalt be revenged! My Emma,
Melchtal's thy father. That's his home till I
Return. Yes, father, thou shalt be revenged!
Lead him in, Emma, lead him in. The sun
Grows hot—The old man's weak and faint! Mind, father,
Mind, thou shall be revenged! In, wife—In—In.
Thou shalt be sure revenged! Come, Albert!

[*EMMA and MELCHTAL enter the cottage.—TELL and
ALBERT go out hastily.*]

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Mountain with Mist.*

GESLER is seen descending the Mountain with a hunting-pole.

Ges. Alone, alone! and every step the mist
Thickens around me! On these mountain tracks
To lose one's way, they say, is sometimes death.
What ho! holloa!—No tongue replies to me!
No thunder hath the horror of this silence!
I dare not stop!—The day, though not half run,
Is not less sure to end night; and night,
Dreary when through the social haunts of men
Her solemn darkness walks, in such a place

As this, comes wrapp'd in most appalling fear !
 I dare not stop ; nor dare I, yet, proceed ;
 Begirt with hidden danger ! If I take
 This hand, it carries me still deeper into
 The wild and savage solitudes I'd shun,
 Where once to faint with hunger is to die !
 If this, it leads me to the precipice,
 Whose brink with fatal horror rivets him
 That treads upon't ; till, drunk with fear, he reels
 Into the gaping void, and headlong down
 Plunges to still more hideous death ! Curséd slaves !
 To let me wander from them ! [*Thunder.*] Hoa !—Holloa !
 My voice sounds weaker to mine ear ! I've not
 The strength to call I had ; and through my limbs
 Cold tremor runs, and sickening faintness seizes
 On my heart ! O heaven, have mercy ! Do not see
 The colour of the hands I lift to thee !
 Look only on the strait wherein I stand,
 And pity it ! Let me not sink ! Uphold,—
 Support me ! Mercy ! mercy ! I shall die !

[He leans against a rock, stupified with terror and exhaustion—it grows darker and darker—the rain pours down in torrents, and a furious wind arises—the mountain streams begin to swell and roar. ALBERT is seen descending by the side of one of the streams, which in his course he crosses with the help of his pole.]

Alb. I'll breathe upon this level, if the wind
 Will let me. Ha ! a rock to shelter me !
 Thanks to't. A man, and fainting ! Courage, friend,
 Courage ! A stranger that has lost his way—
 Take heart !—Take heart ; you're safe. How feel you now ?
[Gives him drink from a flask.]

Ges. Better.

Alb. You have lost your way upon the hill ?

Ges. I have.

Alb. And whither would you go ?

Ges. To Altorf.

Alb. I'll guide you thither.

Ges. You're a child.

Alb. I know

The way. The track I've come is harder far
 To find.

Ges. The track you've come ! What mean you ? Sure
 You have not been still farther in the mountains ?

Alb. I've travelled from Mount Faigel.

Ges. No one with thee ?

Alb. No one but God.

Ges. Do you not fear these storms ?

Alb. God's in the storm !

Ges. And there are torrents, too,
 That must be cross'd.

Alb. God's by the torrent, too!

Ges. You're but a child.

Alb. God will be with a child!

Ges. You're sure you know the way?

Alb. 'Tis but to keep

The side of yonder stream.

Ges. But guide me safe,

I'll give thee gold!

Alb. I'll guide thee safe without.

Ges. Here's earnest for thee. [*Offers gold.*] Here—I'll
double that,

Yea, treble it, let me but see the gate
Of Altorf. Why do you refuse the gold?
Take't.

Alb. No.

Ges. You shall.

Alb. I will not.

Ges. Why?

Alb. Because

I do not covet it; and, though I did,
It would be wrong to take it as the price
Of doing one a kindness.

Ges. Ha!—who taught
Thee that?

Alb. My father.

Ges. Does he live in Altorf?

Alb. No, in the mountains.

Ges. How!—a mountaineer?

He should become a tenant of the city;
He'd gain by't.

Alb. Not so much as he might lose by't.

Ges. What might he lose by't?

Alb. Liberty.

Ges. Indeed!

He also taught thee that?

Alb. He did.

Ges. His name?

Alb. This is the way to Altorf, sir.

Ges. I'd know

Thy father's name.

Alb. The day is wasting—We
Have far to go.

Ges. Thy father's name, I say?

Alb. I will not tell it thee.

Ges. Not tell it me!

Why?

Alb. You may be an enemy of his.

Ges. May be, a friend.

Alb. May be; but should you be

An enemy—Although I would not tell you
My father's name, I'd guide you safe to Altorf.
Will you follow me?

Ges. Ne'er mind thy father's name:
What would it profit me to know't? Thy hand;
We are not enemies.

Alb. I never had
An enemy!

Ges. Lead on.

Alb. Advance your staff
As you descend; and fix it well. Come on!

Ges. What! must we take that steep?

Alb. 'Tis nothing! Come!
I'll go before—Ne'er fear. Come on—Come on!

[*They go out.*]

SCENE II.—*An Apartment in the Castle of Altorf.*

Enter MICHAEL and JAGHELI.

Jag. Yes, Michael, so it stands. She only is
Step-daughter to the Seneschal. The less
Her debt of duty; which, though it were more,
She were absolved from by the tyrant's part
He acts, who weds her where she loathes, not loves.
O, win her for me, Michael, or you'll have
To get a leech for me.

Mic. Get thee a leech? I'll be in want of one
Myself! Thy sickness is infectious. Would
A scalded foot had kept me to the house—
A fever tied me to my bed—a fit
Tripp'd up my heels in the street, ere I had met thee,
To play the leech for thee! I was as sound
As reckless laughter, then; could eat or drink
With him that ask'd me—could go here or there,
And find me ample fund of mirth, where'er
I went—could sing—could dance—could keep awake
Or sleep as well as any one! You've sped me!
Concluded me!—brought all my fair estate
Of rich content to melancholy end!

Jagheli, I'm in love.

Jag. In love!

Mic. In love?

Jag. Michael in love!—What, prithee, made thee fall
In love?

Mic. A cup of wine.

Jag. Another cup
Will work thy cure.

Mic. If thou couldst give me with't
The hand that help'd me to't, and with the hand
The lip that kiss'd the cup ere it touch'd mine.—
Nor was it yet the hand, nor yet the lip,
But the arch smile that quiver'd on the lip,
And seem'd to mock the motion of the hand,

Moving in maiden coyness. Plague on't! I've
 Been posed at mine own trade!—proved an apprentice
 With mine own tools!—Master'd wherein I bragg'd,
 To show my skill—and only by a smile
 Half shown—you scarce could tell if it was there
 Or not—a glimpse and gone, and then again
 A glimpse and gone again, ere you could say
 You saw it!—I'm in love.—I have it here!—
 Here in the very centre of my heart!
 That ever I should live to see the day,
 I fell in love.

Jag. Psha! Michael! You in love!
 You have been laughing till you've got a stitch
 In the side.

Mic. A stitch! If thou hast such another,
 It will not let thee sleep. But hither comes
 Thy lady's chamberlain, with dulcet voice,
 To call thee to her. Now her father's out,
 Make profit of thy calling, master leech,
 Or follow it no more!

Enter BRAUN.

Braun. My lady says
 She'll see you, sir.—Come this way.

Mic. Mind!

Jag. I will.

[*BRAUN and JAGHELI go out.*]

Mic. I'd like to try a race with him in love.
 Can he compare with me in such a strife?—
 With me, could talk him dumb at any time?
 Ere he began to woo, I should be done—
 But, to be done, a man must needs begin.

Enter AGNES, unobserved by MICHAEL.

Agn. What!—Mischief plotting?—'Tis a graceful cheat!
 Rogue as he is, the man's a man to love.

Mic. Hang modesty!

Agn. Well said! When that doth die,
 No cousin goes of thine, to put thee to
 The charge of mourning.

Mic. I'll take heart, and woo
 Her soundly!

Agn. Love have pity on her, then!

Mic. This very hour I'll tell her I'm in love.

Agn. This very hour she'll tell thee thou'rt a fool.

Mic. I'll marry her in a week.

Agn. You'll wait, perhaps,
 A little longer.

Mic. Nay, a week's too long!
 Three days from this.

Agn. Why not to-morrow, sir?
 You'd be as near your wedding.

Mic. Send her now,

Kind Cupid—Send her now. I'm in the mood
To woo her.

Agn. What, if she's not in the mood
To come?

Mic. In such a mood, that were she marble,
I'd soften her—or ice, I'd make her melt.

Agn. O dear!

Mic. Or steel 'itself, she should become
As gently ductile as the generous ore
Comes nearest to her worth, and, yet, not more
Than sums it half, although 'twere virgin gold!

Agn. I'll fly!—

Mic. Now, Cupid, now, I'll conquer her
In all her charms that vanquish'd at a sight!
By every arrow in thy quiver, boy,
If thou hast made me smart—she shan't go free;
So send her to me.

Agn. Nay, in sooth I'll stay.
Who ever fear'd a boaster?

Mic. Cupid, now!
Boy, I would stake my heart against thy wings,
I'd woo, and win, and wed her in a day!

Agn. [*Coming forward.*] O, sir, you are the youth that
brought the leech.

Mic. [*Confused.*] Ma'am?

Agn. And a pretty leech it is you've brought.

Mic. Ma'am?

Agn. He must needs have practised very long,
To be so sapient and profound a leech!
Where studied he, I pray you?

Mic. [*Stammers.*] Studied, ma'am?

Agn. Yes, studied! [*Imitating him.*] Thinkest thou a leech
is made

By only putting on the coat of one?
At such a rate, you would, yourself, be one,
Instead of his good trusty serving-man.

Mic. His serving-man!

Agn. Yes, sir, that pounds his drugs—
The half of which I wot are poisonous—
Makes ready his emplastrums—filthy things!
Boils his decoctions, and makes up his powders,
Ointments, and mixtures: I am sure I've seen you
In your working clothes, without that Sunday chin
You now have on, beating a tune upon
The leech's mortar—to the which you sang
In such melodious strain, that, one and all,
The passers-by did stop their ears, o'ercome
With surfeit of the sweetness!

Mic. Madam,—Why,
Michael! Dear Michael! What are you about?
Are you a man?

Agn. What wages do you get,

Besides the blows the leech bestows on you,
When you forget to make his nostrums up,
Or mar them in the mixing?

Mic. Blows!

Agn. Ay, blows.

Come, come; don't look so fierce! You're just the man
To take them kindly, as, indeed, you should.
For I can read, sir, by your face, you're dull
Of wit, and slow of comprehension; nor
Of memory careful in the hoarding of
What's trusted to it. If the worthy leech
But beats thee once a week, he's not more wise
Than patient.

Mic. [*Aside.*] Michael, thou hast found thy match!
But wilt thou yield without a struggle for't?

No!—Courage, Michael! Now or never, man! [*Struts up to*

AGNES.] Ma'am!

Agn. Bless me, sir, perhaps I may be wrong!
And you are not his serving-man?

Mic. No, ma'am.

Agn. Nor anything under the leech?

Mic. No, ma'am.

Agn. Then, I will e'en make bold to tell you, sir,
I think the leech is just as much a leech

As you are.

Mic. Ma'am!

Agn. I've found him out, sir.

Mic. Have you?

Agn. And found out you—You shall be flay'd alive, sir,
For passing him for a leech. A pretty way
To make my cousin well!

Mic. Your cousin, ma'am?

I took you for the lady's abigail!

Come, come, you are—or nature in her work
Shows little thrift, so fitting things for ends
They come not to—You are her abigail!

Agn. I vow I'm not!

Mic. Your voice with which you vow
Protests you are.

Agn. My voice!

Mic. 'Tis of the pitch

That chills the lover's hope—that answers "no"
To all his sighs; the which, when daughters hear,
They straight bethink them of a breaking heart!
My uncle had an abigail with just
Your voice.

Agn. Indeed?

Mic. Indeed! She was a match
For twenty lovers that my cousin had.
Not one of them could move her! Then your eye——

Agn. Ay, what of that?

Mic. Why such an eye should go

With such a voice! There's watchfulness in it.
'Twas made to pierce disguises, and to look
On pleading lovers, as on stocks and stones!

Agn. Your uncle's abigail, I guess, had such
An eye, too?

Mic. Yes—a little softer, though,
In its fire.—And then your dress!—

Agn. What of my dress?

[*Angrily.*

Mic. Why, 'tis put on in perfect shrew-fashion,
Like armour, straight, and square, and stiff! It speaks
Defiance to male-kind! Were Twenty-one
To put it on, 'twould look Two-score! Wast thou
A beauty now, and teased with lovers, such
A dress as that would free thee from them all.

Agn. Art thou in earnest now?

Mic. In earnest! Yes.

I'll take an oath thou art her abigail—

As much as I'm the leech's serving-man,—

As much as he's the leech. Sweet, we are both

True serving-men to love; and you're the hire;

I serve for.

[*Catching her in his arms.*

Agn. [*Disengaging herself.*] Stay!—Who serves for hire
must wait

Till it be given him, ere he takes his hire;

He must not help himself.

Mic. But give me mine—

Agn. Hush!—Some one comes.

Mic. I'm mute as faith

That's sworn to silence. Let me keep thy hand.

[*They retire near, and remain unseen by BRAUN.*

Enter BRAUN.

Braun. Now, Braun, whoever after calls thee "drone"
Doth lie, and men shall tell him so. Thou'rt wise,
Watchful, and keen of sight; canst see when all
The house besides, with open eyes, are blind—
Stone blind. Thou shalt no more be Braun, the dolt,
The sluggard Braun, the hound, the hog, or Braun
The good-for-naught; or everything, but Braun
Himself! Thou shalt be honest Braun—good Braun!—
Braun that can see a thing!—can find it out
Before the Seneschal!—brave Braun!—The leech
Is but a cheat—my lady but a cheat,—
Her sickness all put on. He is to come
On Wednesday—no, to-day is Wednesday—no,
Wednesday was yesterday. He is to come—
I have forgot the day; no matter. I
Remember he's to come, and that's enough.
He is to come at—Plague upon the hour!
'Twas not at breakfast-hour, or dinner-hour,
Or any hour of meals or sleep—I'm sure
Of that; but then, what signifies the hour,

When I've forgot the day? Most true—most true;
 A lucky thought. No matter what the hour,
 Or what the day; 'tis what he purposed at
 The hour and the day, concerns me to remember,
 And that I don't forget. He is to come
 To take away my lady mistress, who
 Is nothing loth. Remember that, good Braun,
 And make thy fortune with the Seneschal. [Goes out.]

AGNES and MICHAEL advance.

Agn. Undone—undone! If thou remain'st, 'tis death!

Mic. And if I fly, what fly I to but death?

Agn. Nay, save thy life.

Mic. Thou art its precious breath,
 And, parted from thee, 'tis no longer life.

Agn. Could I believe thee!

Mic. If thou wouldst, thou couldst.

There lack of power is only lack of will.

Agn. Nay, say not so; in sooth, I've all the will.

Mic. Then, here, I plight my faith to thee!

Agn. Nay, hold!

Mic. 'Tis done, sweet maid, and cannot be recall'd!

So give me vow for vow. No sentinel
 Keeps watch beneath the casement where you sleep:
 There could I hang, by aid of this kind night,
 A ladder—such a one as lovers find
 Their way by to their mistress' arms, when doors
 Are barr'd against them—Thou'rt not happy here!
 This house of wolves is no abode for thee!
 Let's to our friends, and briefly, ere we part,
 Resolve the means and time for meeting; ne'er
 To part again!

Agn. You'll take the abigail?

Mic. If you will take the leech's serving-man. [They go out.]

SCENE III.—*The Gate of Altorf.*

Enter GESLER and ALBERT.

Alb. You're at the gate of Altorf. [Returning.]

Ges. Tarry, boy!

Alb. I would be gone—I am waited for. [Going.]

Ges. Come back!

Who waits for thee? Come, tell me; I am rich
 And powerful, and can reward.

Alb. 'Tis close

On evening!—I have far to go!—I'm late!

Ges. Stay! I can punish, too.

Alb. I might have left you,

When on the hill I found you fainting, with
The mist around you; but I stopp'd and cheer'd you,
Till to yourself you came again. I offer'd
To guide you, when you could not find the way,
And I have brought you to the gate of Altorf!

Ges. Boy, do you know me?

Alb. No.

Ges. Why fear you, then,
To trust me with your father's name?—Speak.

Alb. Why

Do you desire to know it?

Ges. You have served me,
And I would thank him, if I chanced to pass
His dwelling.

Alb. 'Twould not please him, that a service,
So trifling, should be made so much of!

Ges. Trifling?

You've saved my life.

Alb. Then do not question me,
But let me go!

Ges. When I have learn'd from thee
Thy father's name. What ho!

[*Knocks at the gate.*]

Sentinel. [*Within.*] Who's there?

Ges. Gesler!

[*The gate is opened.*]

Alb. Ha, Gesler!

Ges. [*To the Soldiers.*—Seize him! Wilt thou tell me
Thy father's name?

Alb. No!

Ges. I can bid them cast thee
Into a dungeon! Wilt thou tell it now?

Alb. No!

Ges. I can bid them strangle thee! Wilt tell it?

Alb. Never!

Ges. Away with him! Send Sarnem to me.

[*Soldiers take off ALBERT through the gate.*]

Behind that boy, I see the shadow of
A hand, must wear my fetters, or 'twill try
To strip me of my power. I have felt to-day
What 'tis to live at others' mercy. I
Have tasted fear, to very sickness, and
Owed to a peasant-boy my safety—Ay,
My life! and there does live the slave can say
Gesler's his debtor! How I loathed the free
And fearless air with which he trod the hill!
Yea, though the safety of his steps was mine,
Oft as our path-way brink'd the precipice,
I wish'd to see him miss his footing and
Roll over!—But he's in my power!—Some way
To find the parent nest of this fine eaglet,
And harrow it! I'd like to clip the broad
And full-grown wing that taught his tender pinion
So bold a flight!

Enter SARNEM.

Ges. Ha, Sarnem! Have the slaves,
Attended me, returned?

Sar. They have.

Ges. You'll see

That every one of them be laid in fetters.

Sar. I will.

Ges. Didst mark the boy?

Sar. That pass'd me?

Ges. Yes.

Sar. A mountaineer.

Ges. You'd say so, saw you him
Upon the hills; he walks them like their lord!
I tell thee, Sarnem, looking on that boy,
I felt I was not master of those hills.
He has a father!—Neither promises
Nor threats could draw from him his name—a father
Who talks to him of liberty! I fear
That man!

Sar. He may be found.

Ges. He must; and, soon
As found, disposed of! I can see him now.
He is as palpable to my sight, as if
He stood like you before me. I can see him
Scaling that rock! Yea, I can feel him, Sarnem,
As I were in his grasp, and he about
To hurl me o'er yon parapet! I live
In danger, till I find that man! Send parties
Into the mountains, to explore them far
And wide; and if they chance to light upon
A father, who expects his child, command them
To drag him straight before us. Sarnem, Sarnem,
They are not yet subdued. Some way to prove
Their spirit!—Take this cap; and have it set
Upon a pole in the market-place, and see
That one and all do bow to it. Whoe'er
Resists or pays the homage sullenly,
Our bonds await him! Sarnem, see it done!

[*SARNEM goes out.*
We need not fear the spirit that would rebel
But dares not:—That which dares we will not fear!

[*Goes out.*

SCENE IV.—*The Market-Place.*

*Burghers and Peasants, with PIERRE, THEODORE, and
Savoyards, discovered.*

CHORUS.

Pie. Come, come, another strain.

The. A cheerful one.

Sav. What shall it be?

The. No matter, so 'tis gay.

Begin!

Sav. You'll join the burden?

The. Never fear.

Go on.

[Savoyard plays and sings, during which TELL and VERNER enter, the former leans upon his bow, and listens gloomily.]

The Savoyard from clime to clime
Tunes his strain, and sings his rhyme;
And still, whatever clime he sees,
His eye is bright, his heart's at ease.
For gentle, simple—all reward
The labours of the Savoyard.

The rich forget their pride—the great
Forget the splendour of their state,
Whene'er the Savoyard they meet,
And list his song, and say 'tis sweet;
For titled, wealthy—none regard
The fortune of the Savoyard.

But never looks his eye so bright,
And never feels his heart so light,
As when in beauty's smile he sees
His strain is sweet, his rhyme doth please.
Oh that's the praise doth best reward
The labours of the Savoyard!

But, though the rich retain'd their pride,
And though the great their praise denied,—
Though beauty pleased his song to slight,
His heart would smile, his eye be bright:
His strain itself would still reward
The labours of the Savoyard.

[They shout, and laughingly accompany the Savoyards, who go out, with some of the crowd.]

Tell. What's the heart worth that lends itself to glee,
With argument like theirs for bitterness?
Or is't the melancholy sport of grief
To look on pleasures and to handle them,
That, when it lays the precious jewels down,
It may perceive its poverty the more?
Methinks those cheeks are not exactly dress'd
To please the hearts that own them.

Ver. Doubt it not.

They feel their thralldom!

Tell. So they should!—That's hope—
I'd have it gall them—eat into their flesh!
Long as they fester, there's a remedy;
But for your callous slave I know no cure!

To-morrow brings the test, will surely prove them.
You'll not forget the hour?

Ver. Be sure I will not.

Tell. Erni is warn'd ere this; and Furst, I've said,
Is ready. Fare you well.

Ver. Stay, William!—Now
Observe the people.

[The people have gathered to one side, and look in the opposite direction with apprehension and trouble—those who had gone off return.]

Tell. Ha!—They please me now—
That's honest!—That's sincere! I still preferr'd
The seasons like themselves.—Let summer laugh,
But give me winter with a hearty scowl.
None of your hollow sunshine—Fogs and clouds
Become it best!—I like them now!—Their looks
Are just in season. There has surely been
Some shifting of the wind, upon such brightness
To bring so sudden lowering.

Ver. We shall see.

Pie. 'Tis Sarnem!

The. *[Looking out.]* What is that he brings with him?

Pie. A pole; and on the top of it a cap,
That looks like Gesler's—I could pick it from
A hundred!

The. So could I!—My heart hath oft
Leap'd at the sight of it. What comes he now
To do?

Enter SARNEM, with Soldiers, bearing GESLER's cap upon a pole, which he fixes into the ground; the people looking on in silence and amazement.

Sar. Ye men of Altorf!
Behold the emblem of your master's power
And dignity. This is the cap of Gesler,
Your Governor! Let all bow down to it
Who owe him love and loyalty. To such
As shall refuse this lawful homage, or
Accord it sullenly, he shows no grace,
But dooms them to the penalty of bondage
Till they're instructed 'tis no less their gain
Than duty, to obey their master's mandate.
Conduct the people hither, one by one,
To bow to Gesler's cap.

Tell. Have I my hearing?

[Peasants pass, taking off their hats and bowing to GESLER's cap.]

Ver. Away! Away!

Tell. Or sight?—They do it, Verner!
They do it!—Look!—Ne'er call me man again!
I'll herd with baser animals! They keep
Their stations. Still the dog's a dog—The reptile

Doth know his proper rank, and sinks not to
 The uses of the grade below him.—Man!
 Man! that exalts his head above them all,
 Doth ape them all! He's man, and he's the reptile!
 Look!—Look! Have I the outline of that caitiff,
 Who to the tyrant's feather bends his crown,
 The while he loathes the tyrant?

Ver. Come away,
 Before they mark us.

Tell. No! no!—Since I've tasted,
 I'll e'en taste on! I 'gin, methinks, to like it.

[PIERRE passes the cap, smiles, and bows slightly.]

Sar. What smiled you at?

Pie. I bow'd as low as he did!

Sar. Nay, but you smiled. How dared you smile?

Tell. Good!—good!

Sar. [Striking him.] Take that. Remember when you
 smile again,

To do't in season.

Ver. Come away.

Tell. Not yet,—
 Why would you have me quit the feast, methinks,
 Grows richer and richer?

Ver. You change colour.

Tell. Do I?

And so do you.

Sar. [Striking another.] Bow lower, slave!

Tell. Do you feel

That blow?—My flesh is tingling with't. Well done!
 How pleasantly the rascal lays it on!

Well done! Well done! I would it had been I!

Ver. You tremble, William. Come, you must not stay.

Tell. Why not?—What harm is there? I tell thee, Verner,
 I know no difference 'twixt enduring wrong
 And living in the fear on't. Man! wear
 The tyrant's fetters, when it only wants
 His nod to put them on; and bear his stripes
 When, that I suffer them, he needs but hold
 His finger up! Verner, you're not the man
 To be content because a villain's mood
 Forbears? You're right—you're right! Have with you,
 Verner.

Enter MICHAEL.

Sar. Bow, slave.

Mic. For what?

[TELL stops and turns.]

Sar. Obey, and question then.

Mic. I'll question, now, perhaps not then obey.

Tell. A man!—A man!

Sar. 'Tis Gesler's will that all

Bow to that cap.

Mic. Were it thy lady's cap,
 I'd courtesy to it.

[Laughs.]

Sar. Do you mock us, friend ?

Mic. Not I. I'll bow to Gesler, if you please ;
But not his cap, nor cap of any he
In Christendom !

Tell. A man ;—I say, a man !

Sar. I see you love a jest ; but jest not now,
Else you may make us mirth, and pay for't too.
Bow to the cap !

Tell. The slave would humour him.
Holds he but out !

Sar. Do you hear ?

Mic. I do.

Tell. Well done !

The lion thinks as much of cowering
As he does !

Sar. Once for all, bow to that cap.

Tell. Verner, let go my arm.

Sar. Do you hear me, slave ?

Mic. Slave !

Tell. Let me go !

Ver. He is not worth it, Tell ;

A wild and idle gallant of the town.

Tell. A man !—I'll swear, a man ! Don't hold me, Verner.
Verner, let go my arm !—Do you hear me, man ?

You must not hold me, Verner.

Sar. Villain, bow
To Gesler's cap.

Mic. No—not to Gesler's self !

Sar. Seize him !

Tell. [*Rushing forward.*] Off, off, you base and hireling pack !
Lay not your brutal touch upon the thing
God made in his own image ! Crouch yourselves !
'Tis your vocation, which you should not call
On free-born men to share with you, who stand
Erect, except in presence of their God
Alone !

Sar. What ! shrink you, cowards ? Must I do
Your duty for you ?

Tell. Let them but stir !—I've scatter'd
A flock of hungry wolves, outnumbering them,—
For sport I did it. Sport !—I scatter'd them
With but a staff, not half so thick as this.

[*Wrests SARNEM'S weapon from him—SARNEM and
Soldiers fly.*]

What !—Ha !—Beset by hares ! Ye men of Altorf,
What fear ye ? See what things you fear—the shows
And surfaces of men ! Why stand you wondering there ?
Why look you on a man that's like yourselves,
And see him do the deeds yourselves might do,
And act them not ? Or know you not yourselves ?
That ye are men ?—that ye have hearts and thoughts
To feel and think the deeds of men, and hands

To do them? Fear you God, and fear you him
 Who fears *not* God, but, in his sight, defies him!
 You hunt the chamois, and you've seen him take
 The precipice before he'd yield the freedom
 His Maker gave him; and you are content
 To live in bonds, that have a thought of freedom,
 Which Heaven ne'er gave the little chamois.
 Why gaze you still with blanchéd cheeks upon me?
 Lack you the manhood even to look on,
 And see bold deeds achieved by others' hands?
 Or is't that cap still holds you thralls to fear?
 Be free, then! There! Thus do I trample on
 The cap of Gesler, as I would on him! *[Throws down the pole.]*

Sar. *[Suddenly entering with Soldiers.]* Seize him!

[All the people, except VERNER and MICHAEL, fly.]

Tell. Surrounded!

Mic. Stand!—I'll back thee!

Ver. Madman!

[Forces MICHAEL off.]

[TELL, after a struggle, is secured and thrown to the ground, where they proceed to chain him, and, then, raise him. They raise him, heavily chained, bursting with indignation, and breathless.]

Tell. Slaves!

Sar. Rail on; thy tongue has yet its freedom.

Tell. Slaves!

Sar. On to the castle with him—forward!

Tell. Slaves!

[They go out.]

Re-enter MICHAEL, still held by VERNER.

Mic. There!—There!—They bear him off! Who is he?

Ver. Tell!

Mic. What!—Tell! Why held you me? What was my life,

To save that noble lion from the toils?

Ver. Michael, I knew thee not till now. I see
 Thou art a man to trust. If thou wouldst free
 That lion from the toils, there is a way.

Mic. Show't me.

Ver. Before this time to-morrow, Michael,
 The cantons will be up in arms, and here
 In Altorf.

Mic. Ha!—The tyrant's castle?—

Ver. Yes.

Mic. Verner, thou hast saved a precious life to-day
 In saving mine. Let's see: how many friends
 Can I provide me with 'twixt this and night?

Ver. For what?

Mic. This night I mean to win a bride,
 And marry her to-morrow.

Ver. Art thou mad?

Mic. I am—why not? Who'd not be mad upon
 The golden eve of his bright wedding-day?

Don't wonder at me, Verner. Do you see
Yon turret?

Ver. Yes.

Mic. Spy you a casement, too,
Just half-way up?

Ver. I do.

Mic. This night to me
That casement opens; and a cord, let down,
Takes up a hempen ladder, strong enough
For me to mount.

Ver. What then?

Mic. When I have won
The prize I venture for, and safe bestow'd,
What hinders ten or twenty of my friends—
What hinders them, I say, to lodge with me
This night in yonder turret? Come along;
I've scanty time to bid so many guests.
Come on; and, as we go, possess me of
Your plans, the minute you're to act upon them,
With all the rest! Don't wonder at me, man:
You'll bless the day that Michael took a wife. [*They go out.*]

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Chamber in the Castle.*

Enter GESLER, with RODOLPH, LUTOLD, GERARD, and Officers.

Ges. [*To RODOLPH.*] Double the guards. Stay! place your
trustiest men

At the postern. Stop! You'd go with half your errand:

I'll tell you when to go! Let every soul

Within the walls be under arms! The sick

That do not keep their beds, or can rise from them,

Must take a weapon! Can they only raise

A hand, we've use for them. Away now. Tumult

[*RODOLPH goes out.*]

Under our very brows! The slaves will come,

In torrents from the hills, and, like a flood,

O'erwhelm us! Lutold, 'tis our final order,

On pain of death, no quarter shall be given!

Another word!—Let them be men, this once,

I promise them the sacking of the town!

Without reserve, I give it them—of property

Or soul! I've nothing further, sir. [*LUTOLD goes out.*] I'll

raze

Their habitations, hunt them from their hills,

Exterminate them, ere I'll live in fear !

What word now ? [To RODOLPH, who re-enters.]

Rod. 'Twas a false alarm. The people
Paid prompt submission to your order : one
Alone resisted, whom they have secured,
And bring in chains before you.

Ges. So—I breathe
Again ! 'Twas false, then, that our soldiers fled ?

Rod. 'Twas but a party of them fled, my lord ;
Which, reinforced, return'd, and soon o'erpower'd
The rash offender.

Ges. What ! fled they from one ?
A single man ? How many were there ?

Rod. Four,
With Sarnem.

Ges. Sarnem ! Did he fly ?

Rod. He did ;
But 'twas for succour.

Ges. Succour ! One to four,
And four need succour ? I begin to think
We're sentinell'd by effigies of men,
Not men themselves. And Sarnem, too ! What kind
Of man is he that made a tiger cower ?
Yea, and with backers ! I should like to see
That man.

Rod. He's here.

Ges. I'm on the hills again !
I see their bleak tops looking down upon me,
And think I hear them ask me with a scowl
If I would be their master. Do not sheathe .
Your swords !—Stand near me !—Beckon some of those
About me. I would be attended. If
He stirs, despatch him.

Rod. He's in chains, my lord.

Ges. I see—I see he is.

Enter SARNEM and Soldiers, with TELL in chains.

Sar. Down, slave !
Behold the Governor. Down !—Down ! and beg
For mercy !

Ges. [*Seated.*] Does he hear ?

Sar. Debate it not.
Be prompt. Submission, slave ! Thy knee—thy knee !
Or with thy life thou playest.

Rod. Let's force him to
The ground.

Ges. Can I believe my eyes ? He smiles !

Ger. Why don't you smite him for that look ?

Ges. He grasps
His chains as he would make a weapon of them
To lay the smiter dead. What kind of man

Is this, that looks, in thralldom, more at large,
Than they who lay it on him?

Rod. Lo you how
The caitiff scowls! Pull out his eyes!

Lut. Lop off
A limb for him!

Ges. A heart accessible as his to trembling
The rock or marble bath. They fear far more
To inflict than he to suffer. Each one calls
Upon the other to accomplish that
Himself hath not the manhood to attempt!
Why don't they take him from my sight? Behold!
He has brought them to a pause; and there they stand
Like things entranced by some magician's spell,
Wondering that they are masters of their organs,
And not their faculties. They gaze on me
As one expected to perform a part
Which he forgets to fill. [*Rises.*] They must not see me
So lost. Come, draw thy breath with ease—thou'rt Gesler—
Their lord; and he's a slave thou look'st upon!
Canst thou not mulct the villain in his life?
Hast thou not tortures to requite him with?
'Tis only in the absence of thy wrath
He braves it. Let it show itself—at once
He's passive as the dust thou tread'st upon!
Why speak'st thou not?

Tell. For wonder.

Ges. Wonder!

Tell. Yes,

That thou shouldst seem a man!

Ges. What should I seem?

Tell. A monster!

Ges. Ha! Beware—Think on thy chains.

Tell. Though they were doubled—Though they weigh'd me
down

Prostrate to the earth, methinks I could rise up
Erect with nothing but the honest pride
Of telling thee, usurper, to the teeth,
Thou art a monster! Think upon my chains!
Show me the link of them, which, could it speak,
Would give its evidence against my word.
Think on my chains! They are my vouchers, which
I show to Heaven, as my acquittance from
The impious swerving of abetting thee
In mockery of its lord!—Think on my chains!
How came they on me?

Ges. Darest thou question me?

Tell. Darest thou not answer?

Ges. Do I hear?

Tell. Thou dost!

Ges. Beware my vengeance!

Tell. Can it more than kill?

Ges. Enough, it can do that.

Tell. No ; not enough !

It cannot take away the grace of life—
 Its comeliness of port that virtue gives—
 Its head erect with consciousness of truth—
 Its rich attire of honourable deeds—
 Its fair report that's rife on good men's tongues !
 It cannot lay its hands on these, no more
 Than it can pluck his brightness from the sun,
 Or with polluted finger tarnish it.

Ges. But it can make thee writhe ?

Tell. It may !

Ges. And groan ?

Tell. It may ; and I may cry.

Go on, though it should make me groan again !

Ges. Whence comest thou ?

Tell. From the mountains. Wouldst thou learn
 What news from thence ?

Ges. Canst tell me any ?

Tell. Ay !

They watch no more the avalanche.

Ges. Why so ?

Tell. Because they look for thee ! The hurricane
 Comes unawares upon them ; from its bed
 The torrent breaks, and finds them in its track.

Ges. What do they, then ?

Tell. Thank Heaven, it is not thou !
 Thou has perverted nature in them. The earth
 Presents her fruits to them, and is not thank'd !
 The harvest sun is constant, and they scarce
 Return his smile ! their flocks and herds increase,
 And they look on as men who count a loss !
 They hear of thriving children born to them,
 And never shake the teller by the hand ;
 While those they have, they see grow up and flourish,
 And think as little of caressing them,
 As they were things a deadly plague had smit !—
 There's not a blessing Heaven vouchsafes them, but
 The thought of thee converts into a curse,
 As something they must lose—and richer were
 For ever to have lack'd !

Ges. That pleases me !

I'd have them like their peaks, that never smile,
 Though joyous summer tempt them ne'er so much.

Tell. Nay, but they sometimes smile.

Ges. Ay !—when is that ?

Tell. When they discourse of vengeance.

Ges. Vengeance ! Dare

They talk of that ?

Tell. Ay, and expect it, too.

Ges. From whence ?

Tell. From Heaven !

Ges. From Heaven?

Tell. And from the hands
Which they lift up to it on every hill
For justice on thee!

Ges. Where is thy abode?

Tell. I told thee—in the mountains.

Ges. How lies it?—North or south?

Tell. Nor north, nor south.

Ges. Is't to the east or west, then?

Tell. Where it lies
Concerns thee not.

Ges. It does!

Tell. And if it does,
Thou shalt not learn.

Ges. Art married?

Tell. Married!—Yes.

Ges. And hast a family?

Tell. A son.

Ges. A son!

Sarnem!

Sar. My lord, the boy!

[*GESLER signs to SARNEM to keep silence, and whispering, sends him off.*]

Tell. The boy!—What boy?

Is't mine?—and have they netted my young fledgeling?
Now Heaven support me, if they have! He'll own me,
And share his father's ruin! But a look
Would put him on his guard—yet how to give it!
Now, heart, thy nerve: forget thou'rt flesh—be rock!
They come—They come!—That step!—
That step!—So light upon the ground!
How heavy does it fall upon my heart!
I feel my child!—'Tis he!
We can but perish.

*Enter SARNEM with ALBERT, whose eyes are riveted on TELL'S
bow, which SARNEM carries.*

Alb. [*Aside.*] Yes; I was right. It is my father's bow!
For there's my father! I'll not own him, though!

Sar. See!

Alb. What?

Sar. Look there.

Alb. What would you have me see?

Sar. Thy father.

Alb. That is not my father, sir.

Tell. My boy—my boy!—my own brave boy! He's safe!

Sar. [*Aside to GESLER.*] They're like each other.

Ges. Yet I see no sign

Of recognition to betray the tie
That binds a father and his child.

Sar. My lord,

I'm sure it is his father. Look at them:

That boy did spring from him ; or never cast
 Came from the mould it fitted ! It may be
 A preconcerted thing, 'gainst such a chance,
 That they survey each other coldly thus.
 Besides, with those who lead the mountain life,
 The passions are not taken by surprise
 As ready as with us. They commune still,
 From day to day, with nature's wonders ; till
 They see her fiercest terrors without awe,
 And catch, from her, her stern and solemn look,
 That e'en their mirth seems thoughtful.

Ges. [*Rises.*] We shall try.

Lead forth the caittiff !

Sar. To a dungeon ?

Ges. No ;

Into the court.

Sar. The court, my lord ?

Ges. And tell

The headsman to make ready. Quick ! He dies !

The slave shall die ! You mark'd the boy ?

Sar. I did.

He started—'Tis his father !

Ges. We shall see.

Away with him !

Tell. Stop !—stay !

Ges. What would you ?

Tell. Time,—

A little time to call my thoughts together !

Ges. Thou shalt not have a minute.

Tell. Some one, then,

To speak with !

Ges. Hence with him !

Tell. A moment, stop !

Let me speak to the boy.

Ges. Is he thy son ?

Tell. And if

He were, art thou so lost to nature as

To send me forth before his face to die ?

Ges. Well, speak with him. Now, Sarnem, mark them
 well.

[*ALBERT goes to TELL.*]

Tell. Thou dost not know me, boy ; and well for thee

Thou dost not. I'm the father of a son

About thy age. I dare not tell thee where

To find him, lest he should be found of those

'Twere not so safe for him to meet with. Thou,

I see, wast born, like him, upon the hills ;

If thou shouldst 'scape thy present thralldom, thou

Mayst chance to cross him ; if thou shouldst, I pray thee

Relate to him what has been passing here,

And say I laid my hand upon thy head,

And said to thee—If he were here, as thou art,

Thus would I bless him : Mayst thou live, my boy,

To see thy country free, or die for her
As I do!

Sar. Mark!—He weeps.

Tell. Were he my son,
He would not shed a tear! He would remember
The cliff where he was bred, and learn'd to scan
A thousand fathoms' depth of nether air!
Where he was train'd to hear the thunder talk,
And meet the lightning eye to eye! Where last
We spoke together—when I told him, death
Bestow'd the brightest gem that graces life,
Embraced for virtue's sake,—He shed a tear!
Now, were he by, I'd talk to him, and his cheek
Should never blanch, nor moisture dim his eye,—
I'd talk to him!—

Sar. He falters.

Tell. 'Tis too much!
And yet it must be done! I'd talk to him—

Ges. Of what?

Tell. [*Turns to GESLER.*] The mother, tyrant, whom thou
dost make

A widow of! I'd talk to him of her! [*Turns to ALBERT.*]

I'd bid him tell her, next to liberty,
Her name was the last words my lips pronounced;
And I would charge him, never to forget
To love and cherish her, as he would have
His father's dying blessing rest upon him!

Sar. You see, what one suggests, the other acts.

Tell [*aside*]. So well he bears it, I, almost, give
way!

My boy! my boy!—O, for the hills!—the hills!
To see him bound along their tops again,
With liberty, so light upon his heel,
That, like the chamois, he flings behind him—

Sar. Was there not all the father in that look?

Ges. Yet 'tis against nature.

Sar. Not if he believes

Owning the boy, the son belike might share
The father's fate.

Ges. I did not think of that!

I thank thee, Sarnem, for the thought. 'Tis well
The boy is not thy son. He is about
To die along with thee.

Tell. To die! For what?

Ges. For having braved my power, as thou hast!—Lead
Them forth.

Tell. He's but a child.

Ges. Away with them!

Tell. Perhaps an only child.

Ges. No matter.

Tell. He

May have a mother.

Ges. So the viper hath;
 And yet who spares it for the mother's sake?
Tell. I talk to stone! I talk to it as though
 'Twere flesh, yet know 'tis none! No wonder! I've
 An argument might turn as hard a thing
 To flesh—to softest, kindest flesh, that e'er
 Sweet Pity chose to lodge her fountain in!—
 But, still, 'tis naught but stone! I'll talk to it
 No more! Come, my boy! I taught thee how to live!—
 I'll show thee how
 To die—

Ges. He is thy child!

Tell. [*Bursting into tears, and embracing ALBERT.*] He is
 my child!

Ges. I've wrung a tear from him! Thy name?

Tell. My name?

It matters not to keep it from thee, now:

My name is Tell.

Ges. What!—William Tell?

Tell. The same.

Ges. What! he so famed 'bove all his countrymen
 For guiding o'er the stormy lake the boat?
 And such a master of his bow, 'tis said
 His arrows never miss?—Indeed!—I'll take
 Exquisite vengeance!—Mark!—I'll spare thy life,
 Thy boy's, too.—Both of you are free—on one
 Condition.

Tell. Name it.

Ges. I would see you make
 A trial of your skill with that same bow
 You shoot so well with.

Tell. Please you, name the trial
 You would have me make.

Ges. You look upon your boy
 As though instinctively you guess'd it.

Tell. Look
 Upon my boy!—What mean you? Look upon
 My boy as though I guess'd it!—Guess'd the trial
 You would have me make! Guess'd it, instinctively!
 Instinctively! You do not mean?—No!—No!—
 You would not have me make a trial of
 My skill upon my child! Impossible!
 I do not guess your meaning.

Ges. I would see
 Thee hit an apple at the distance of
 A hundred paces.

Tell. Is my boy to hold it?

Ges. No.

Tell. No!—I'll send the arrow through the core!

Ges. It is to rest upon his head.

Tell. O, Nature!
 Thou hear'st him!

Ges. Thou dost hear the choice I give—
Such trial of the skill, thou'rt master of,
Or death to both of you, not otherwise
To be escaped.

Tell. Oh, monster!

Ges. Wilt thou do it?

Alb. He will! he will!

Tell. Ferocious monster! Make
A father murder his own child!

Ges. Take off

His chains, if he consents.

Tell. With his own hand!

Ges. Does he consent?

Alb. He does.

[*GESLER signs to his Officers, who proceed to take off
TELL's chains, TELL all the while unconscious of
what they do.*]

Tell. With his own hand!—

Murder his child with his own hand!

The hand I've led him, when an infant, by!

'Tis beyond horror—'Tis most horrible!

Amazement!—'Tis too much for flesh and blood

To bear!—I should be made of steel to stand it!

And I believe I am, almost, about

To turn to some such thing; for feeling grows

Benumb'd within me, that I seem to lose

Almost the power of hating him, and all's

A calm, where all, but now, was raging tempest!

[*His chains, which they have been employed in unloos-
ing, fall off.*]

What!—Do you make me ready, while I wist not?

[*Lifts the manacles from the ground, and holds them to
the soldiers.*]

Villains! put on my chains again. My hands

Are free from blood! and have no gust for it,

That they would drink my child's!—Here!—Here!—I'll
not

Murder my boy for Gesler!

Alb. Father—Father!

You will not hit me, father!

Tell. Hit thee!—Send

The arrow through thy brain!—or, missing that,

Shoot out an eye!—or, if thine eye escapes,

Mangle the cheek I've seen thy mother's lips

Cover with kisses!—Hit thee!—Hit a hair

Of thee, and cleave thy mother's heart! Who's he

That bids me do it!—Show him me,—the monster!

Make him perceptible unto my reason

And heart! In vain my senses vouch for it!

I hear he lives!—I see it!—but it is

A prodigy that nature can't believe!

Ges. Dost thou consent?

Tell. Give me my bow and quiver.

Ges. For what?

Tell. To shoot my boy!

Alb. No, father! no,

To save me!—You'll be sure to hit the apple.

Will you not save me, father?

Tell. Lead me forth!—

I'll make the trial!

Alb. Thank you!

Tell. Thank me!—Do

You know for what?—I will not make the trial,

To take him to his mother in my arms,

And lay him down a corse before her!

Ges. Then

He dies this moment; and you, certainly,

Murder the child, whose life you have a chance

To save, and will not use it.

Tell. Well—I'll do it:

I'll make the trial.

Alb. [*Runs up to TELL and embraces him.*] Father!

Tell. [*Putting ALBERT behind him.*] Speak not to me!

Let me not hear thy voice!—Thou must be dumb:

And so should all things be!—earth should be dumb!

And heaven!—unless its thunders mutter'd at

The deed, and sent a bolt to stop it! Give me

My bow and quiver!

Ges. When all's ready.

Tell. Ready!—

I must be calm, with such a mark to hit!

[*ALBERT is about to take TELL's hand.*

Don't touch me, child!—Don't speak to me!—Lead on!

[*TELL suddenly stops.*

Ges. Why do you stop?

Tell. We have forgot!—'Tis dusk!

Look at that mountain-peak! The sun is down

To all below—will soon be down to that!

You wish to see a trial of my skill,

You ask for one, harder a thousand times

Than e'er the hardest, yet, I e'er essay'd!

You would not have me shoot, without my eyes?

'Twere just the same to shoot, without the light!

The peak, you see, is now gone out!—The court's

To reach—The ground's to choose—The distance

Has to be measured. Then, the boy's to place,

The mark to be adjusted—Where is it?

Where is the apple!—Ere all's ready, 'twill

Be night. As well expect me, were I dead,

To draw a bow, as now!—To-morrow, Gesler.

Ges. Hadst thou not linger'd!—

Tell. It were done—I know

It shall be done to-morrow, wilt thou grant

The time?—'Tis night already!

Ges. Well!—To-morrow!
Take them to separate dungeons!

Tell. To the same!
He's but a child!—He has his part to play!
I would prepare him for it!—It may be
His last night. Let him spend it with his father!

Ges. To the same dungeon!

Tell. Now, my child, thy hand! [They go out severally.]

SCENE II.—*Supposed to be in the Vicinity of the Castle.*

Enter WALDMAN and MICHAEL.

Wal. I sore mistrust thee, Michael! If thou play'st
The trifier with me now——

Mic. Dear father, fear not.

Wal. But I do fear thee, boy; and, if not thee,
I fear this stormy night. Dost hear the thunder?

Mic. I do; but it is distant.

Wal. There again!

Mic. It sounds in the direction of the lake.

Wal. Why hast thou brought me hither?

Mic. Worthy sire,
Thou said'st I ne'er would marry till my teeth
Were gone. To show thee, to thy heart's content,
The prophecy was wrong, I've brought thee hither
To play her escort to my gentle bride,
Whom thou shalt see anon.

Wal. He's past all hope!
Am I thy butt to play a jest upon?
Is this a place to jest?

Mic. No place more safe;
No sentinel is here to mar a jest,
Were I disposed for one.

Wal. The storm comes on.
Wouldst hold me here to bide its pelting?

Mic. Hush!
Dear father, hush, unless you'd spoil my wedding,
And mar the only chance of making me
A sober man. And, look, my bridesmen come.

*Enter JAGHELI, with THEODORE, and a band of Young Men,
with a rope-ladder.*

Mic. Welcome, Jagheli! Father, my chief man,
Who means to take example by your son—
Marry a wife, and ever after live
The gravest man in Altorf.

Wal. Let me see
Thy bride, and I'll believe thou mean'st to wed.
It cannot be! There's not a man in Altorf
Would take thee for his son-in-law!

Mic. No man
In Altorf shall call me his son-in-law.
Wal. Where wilt thou get thy bride, then?

Mic. Thou shalt see.
Ha! there's the light—Jagheli, that's the casement!
Come on! Friends, stay you here. And, father, pray
Command your patience, till I give you proof,
Such as shall full content you, that I mean
With all my heart to be a sober man.

[*MICHAEL and JAGHELI go out with the rope-ladder.*]

Wal. Friends, can you help me to a clue to find
This riddle out?

The. We're sworn to secrecy,
And may not answer you.

Wal. I see—I see—
He's not content to make a jest of me,
But brings his friends to join him in the laugh!
He wed!—He take a wife!—He'll bring some boy,
Dress'd in his sister's gown and tucker, with
His voice upon the crack—to pass him off
For's bride upon me. I'll begone, and balk [More thunder.
His most irreverent humour! Friends, adieu!
I give you joy of this fair sport. [Going.

Enter MICHAEL and AGNES—JAGHELI and ANNELI.

Mic. Sweet love,
Fear not! I'll give thee to safe warding, till
I take thee to mine own. Fair Anneli,
Go with thy cousin. Father, to thy care
We trust these jewels, that shall keep us rich
For life! Don't wonder, Sweet—There's not a care
This day may cost thee, but each after-day
Shall bring as many golden joys as hours
To pay thee for.

Ann. I trust they mean us honest!

Wal. A woman, as I live!

Agn. Honest or not,
No matter now, dear coz; our fortune's told—
We're caught!

Wal. A woman, too.

Mic. By hands so kind!—
So loving in their tendance on their prize,
You'd not exchange captivity for freedom.

Agn. Don't try us!

Mic. Not unless you choose.

Ann. Dear coz!
Let us go back.

Agn. Nay, coz, we'll e'en go on.
These gallants trusted once, to trust them on,
They say, is sometimes to secure the debt.

Wal. Fair lady, I will be his bail, to see
Due payment made—if you will trust to me.

Mic. Dear father, when you hear me jest again,
You'll drink your grandson's health that is to be,
And pardon me for him.—Away!—Away!
These heads demand a kinder canopy
Than this rough sky affords.

Wal. Go you not with us?

Mic. No; our brides forbid.

Nor may we see them till we bring the priest
To visit them to-morrow; and, besides,
We've comrades here, bright gallants, as ourselves
Were once, of whom we'd take a handsome leave.
This hour, that parts us thus, we'll soon forgive,
For the fair fellows that shall follow it.
Good night—Sound sleep—Sweet dreams—good night—good
night— [WALDMAN, AGNES, and ANNELI go out.]

Now, friends, the casement! There the ladder hangs;
Climb fast, but silently. The chamber on
The postern opens, and is lock'd, within.
Thence we can watch the motions of our friends,
And at the moment lend our sudden aid,
When most it may avail.—On—On and up!

[Young Men go out.]

Now, Michael, here's the closing of thy jests,
Or making of thee!—Fortune hold thy friend,
There's not a sober man in Altorf but
To own thy brows, would wear the cap and bells! [Goes out.]

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Tell's Cottage.*—*Melchtal asleep upon a couch, at
the head of which Emma is watching.*

EMMA [rising, and coming forward].

I never knew a weary night before!
I have seen the sun a dozen times go down,
And still no William,—and the storm was on;
Yet have I laid me down, in peace, to sleep,
The mountain with the lightning all a-blaze,
And shaking with the thunder,—but, to-night,
Mine eyes refuse to close! The old man rests.
Pain hath outworn itself, and turn'd to ease.
How deathly calm's the night! What's that? I'm grown
An idiot with my fears. I do not know
The avalanche! Great Power that hurls it down,
Watch o'er my boy, and guide his little steps!
What keeps him? 'Tis but four hours' journey, hence;
He'd rest; then four hours back again. What keeps him?

Erni would sure be found by him—He knows
The track, well as he knows the road to Altorf!

Mel. Help!

[*In his sleep.*]

Emma. What's the matter! Only the old man dreaming.
He thinks again they're pulling out his eyes.
I'm sick with terror! Merciful powers! what's this
That fills my heart with horrible alarm,
And yet it cannot see!

Mel. [*Waking.*] Where am I?

Emma. Father!

Mel. My daughter, is it thou? Thank heaven, I'm here.
Is't day yet?

Emma. No.

Mel. Is't far on the night?

Emma. Methinks, about the turn on't.

Mel. Is the boy
Come back?

Emma. No, father.

Mel. Nor thy husband?

Emma. No.

Mel. A woful wife and mother have I made thee!
Would thou hadst never seen me.

Emma. Father!

Mel. Child?

Emma. Methinks I hear a step!—I do! [*Knocking.*] A
knock!

Mel. 'Tis William!

Emma. No, it is not William's knock. [*Opens the door.*]
I told you so! Your will?

Enter STRANGER.

Stran. Seeing a light,
I e'en made bold to knock, to ask for shelter,
For I have miss'd my way.

Emma. Whence come you, friend?

Stran. From Altorf.

Emma. Altorf!—Any news from thence?

Stran. Ay! News to harrow parents' hearts, and make
The barren bless themselves that they are childless!

Emma. May heaven preserve my boy!

Mel. What says thy news?

Stran. Art thou not Melchtal—he whose eyes 'tis said
The tyrant has torn out?

Mel. Yes, friend, the same.

Stran. Is this thy cottage?

Mel. No; 'tis William Tell's.

Stran. 'Tis William Tell's!—And that's his wife!—Good
night.

Emma. [*Rushing between him and the door.*] Thou stirr'st
not hence until thy news be told!

Stran. My news? In sooth 'tis nothing thou wouldst heed.

Emma. 'Tis something none should heed so well as I!

Stran. I must be gone.

Emma. Thou seest a tigress, friend,
Spoil'd of her mate and young, and yearning for them.
Don't thwart her! Come, thy news! What fear'st thou, man;
What more has she to dread, who reads thy looks,
And knows the most has come. Thy news? Is't bondage?

Stran. It is.

Emma. Thank heaven it is not death. Of one—
Or two?

Stran. Of two.

Emma. A father and a son?
Is't not?

Stran. It is.

Emma. My husband and my son
Are in the tyrant's power! There's worse than that!
What's that, is news to harrow parents' breasts,
The which the thought to only tell, 'twould seem,
Drives back the blood to thine?—Thy news, I say!
Wouldst thou be merciful, this is not mercy!
Wast thou the mark, friend, of the bowman's aim,
Wouldst thou not have the fatal arrow speed,
Rather than watch it hanging in the string?
Thou'lt drive me mad! Let fly at once!—

Mel. Thy news from Altorf, friend, whate'er it is!

Stran. To save himself and child from certain death,
Tell is to hit an apple resting on
The stripling's head.

Mel. My child! my child!—

Speak to me!—Stranger, hast thou kill'd her?

Emma. No!

No, father. I'm the wife of William Tell;
Oh but to be a man! to have an arm
To fit a heart bursting with the sense of wrong!
Unnatural—insufferable wrong!
When makes the tyrant trial of his skill?

Stran. To-morrow.

Emma. Spirit of the lake and hill,
Inspire thy daughter! On the head of him
Who makes his pastime of a mother's pangs,
Launch down thy vengeance by a mother's hand.
Know'st the signal when the hills shall rise? [*To MELCHTAL.*]

Mel. Are they to rise?

Emma. I see thou knowest naught.

Stran. Something's on foot! 'Twas only yesterday
That, travelling from our canton, I espied,
Slow toiling up a steep, a mountaineer
Of brawny limb, upon his back a load
Of fagots bound. Curious to see what end
Was worthy of such labour, after him
I took the cliff: and saw its lofty top
Receive his load, which went but to augment
A pile of many another.

Emma. 'Tis by fire!
Fire is the signal for the hills to rise—

[*Rushes out.*]

Mel. Went she not forth?

Stran. She did—she's here again
And brings with her a lighted brand.

Mel. My child,
What dost thou with a lighted brand?

Re-enter EMMA, with a brand.

Emma. Prepare
To give the signal for the hills to rise!

Mel. Where are the fagots, child, for such a blaze?

Emma. I'll find the fagots, father.

[*Exit.*]

Mel. Is she gone
Again?

Stran. She is—I think into her chamber.

Emma. [*Rushing in.*] Father, the pile is fired!

Mel. What pile, my child?

Emma. The joists and rafters of our cottage, father!

Mel. Thou hast not fired thy cottage!—but thou hast!
Alas, I hear the crackling of the flames!

Emma. Say'st thou alas! when I could say, thank heaven?

Father, this blaze will set the land a-blaze

With fire that shall preserve, and not destroy it,

Blaze on! blaze on! Oh, mayst thou be a beacon

To light its sons enslaved to liberty!

How fast it spreads! A spirit's in the fire;

It knows the work it does. [*Goes to the door, and opens it.*]

The land is free!

Yonder's another blaze. Beyond that shoots

Another up!—Anon will every hill

Redden with vengeance. Father, come! What's ex

Betides us, worse we're certain can't befall,

And better may! Oh, be it liberty—

Safe hearths and homes, husbands and children. Come—

It spreads apace. Blaze on—blaze on—blaze on! [*Exit.*]

SCENE THE LAST.—*Without the Castle.*

Enter, slowly, several Citizens, as if observing something following them, VERNER, and THEODORE.

Ver. The pace they're moving at is that of men
About to do the work of death. Some wretch
Is doom'd to suffer. Should it be my friend—
Should it be Tell!

The. No doubt 'tis some good man.

Ver. Poor Switzerland! poor country! Not a son
Is left thee now, that's worth the name of one.
'Tis not a common man, with such parade,

They lead to death. I count four castellains
Already.

The. There's a fifth.

Ver. And Sarnem, too!

Do you see him?

The. Yes: and Gesler follows him.

Who can it be?

Ver. We'll see. He's coming, now—

'Tis William Tell!

The. Verner, do you know the boy

That follows him?

Ver. A boy! It is his son!

What horror's to be acted? Do you see

The headsman?

The. No! I see no headsman there,

No apparatus for the work of death.

Perhaps they're not to suffer!

Ver. Lo you how

The women clasp their hands, and now and then

Look up to heaven! You see that some do weep.

No headsman's there; but Gesler's at no loss

For means of cruelty because there lacks

A headsman!

Enter PIERRE.

Pie. Horrible!—most horrible
Decree!—To save his own and Albert's life,
Tell is to hit an apple resting on
The head of his own child!

Enter, slowly, Burghers and Women, LUTOLD, RODOLPH, GERARD, SARNEM, GESLER, TELL, ALBERT, and a Soldier bearing TELL's bow and quiver—another with a basket of apples—Soldiers, &c.

Ges. That is your ground. Now shall they measure, thence,
A hundred paces. Take the distance.

Tell. Is

The line a true one?

Ges. True or not, what is't

To thee?

Tell. What is't to me? A little thing,

A very little thing—A yard or two,

Is nothing here or there—were it a wolf

I shot at! Never mind!

Ges. Be thankful, slave,

Our grace accords thee life on any terms.

Tell. I will be thankful, Gesler! Villain, stop!

You measure to the sun.

Ges. And what of that?

What matter, whether to or from the sun?

Tell. I'd have it at my back!—The sun should shine
Upon the mark, and not on him that shoots.

I cannot see to shoot against the sun!—

I will not shoot against the sun!

Ges. Give him his way!—Thou hast cause to bless my mercy.

Tell. I shall remember it. I'd like to see
The apple I'm to shoot at.

Soldier [with the basket of apples]. Here!

Ges. Show me
The basket!—There—

Tell. You've pick'd the smallest one.

Ges. I know I have.

Tell. O! do you?—But you see
The colour on't is dark—I'd have it light,
To see it better.

Ges. Take it as it is:
Thy skill will be the greater if thou hitt'st it.

Tell. True!—True!—I didn't think of that—I wonder
I did not think of that.—Give me some chance
To save my boy! I will not murder him

If I can help it—for the honour of
The form thou wear'st, if all the heart be gone.

Ges. Well! choose thyself.

[Hands a basket of apples.—TELL takes one.]

Tell. Have I a friend among
The lookers on?

Ver. Here, Tell!

Tell. I thank thee, Verner!
He is a friend that does not mind a storm
To shake a hand with us! I must be brief.
When once the bow is drawn, we cannot take
The shot too soon! Verner, whatever be
The issue of this hour, the common cause
Must not stand still! Let not to-morrow's sun
Set on the tyrant's banner.—Verner! Verner!
The boy!—the boy!—Think'st thou he has the courage
To stand it?

Ver. Yes.

Tell. Does he tremble?

Ver. No.

Tell. Art sure?

Ver. I am.

Tell. How looks he?

Ver. Clear and smilingly.
If you doubt it—look yourself.

Tell. No—no—my friend,
To hear it is enough!

Ver. He bears himself
So much above his years—

Tell. I know!—I know.

Ver. With constancy so modest—

Tell. I was sure
He would—

Ver. And looks with such relying love
And reverence upon you

Tell. Man! Man! Man!

No more! Already I'm too much the father
To act the man!—Verner, no more, my friend!
I would be flint—flint—flint! Don't make me feel
I'm not—You do not mind me!—Take the boy
And set him, Verner, with his back to me.—
Set him upon his knees—and place the apple
Upon his head, so that the stem may front me—
Thus, Verner—Charge him to keep steady—Tell him
I'll hit the apple!—Verner, do all this
More briefly than I tell it thee.

Ver. Come, Albert!

Alb. May I not speak with him before I go?

Ver. No—

Alb. I would only kiss his hand.

Ver. You must not.

Alb. I must!—I cannot go from him without!

Ver. It is his will you should.

Alb. His will, is it?

I am content, then—come.

Tell. My boy!

[*Holding out his arms to him.*

Alb. My father!

[*Running into TELL's arms.*

Tell. If thou canst bear it, should not I?—Go now,
My son—and keep in mind that I can shoot.—
Go, boy—Be thou but steady, I shall hit
The apple. [*Kisses him.*] Go!—God bless thee!—Go!—My
bow! [SARNEM gives the bow.]

Thou wilt not fail thy master, wilt thou?—Thou
Hast never fail'd him yet, old servant.—No!
I'm sure of thee—I know thy honesty,
Thou'rt stanch!—Stanch!—I'd deserve to find thee trea-
cherous,

Could I suspect thee so. Come, I will stake
My all upon thee! Let me see my quiver.

Ges. Give him a single arrow.

Tell. Do you shoot?

Lut. I do.

Tell. Is't so you pick an arrow, friend?

The point, you see, is blunt, the feather jagg'd;
That's all the use 'tis fit for.

[*Breaks it.*

Ges. Let him have
Another.

Tell. Why, 'tis better than the first,
But yet not good enough for such an aim
As I'm to take. 'Tis heavy in the shaft:
I'll not shoot with it! [*Throws it away.*] Let me see my
quiver.

Bring it! 'tis not one arrow in a dozen
I'd take to shoot with at a dove, much less

A dove like that? What is't you fear? I'm but
 A naked man!—A wretched naked man!
 Your helpless thrall, alone in the midst of you,
 With every one of you a weapon in
 His hand. What can I do in such a strait
 With all the arrows in that quiver? Come,
 Will you give it me or not?

Ges. It matters not.

Show him the quiver. You're resolved, I see,
 Nothing shall please you.

[TELL kneels and picks out an arrow, which he hides under his vest, and then selects another.]

Tell. Am I so?—That's strange,
 That's very strange!—Is the boy ready?

Ver. Yes.

Tell. I'm ready too!—Keep silence, every one!
 And stir not for my child's sake!—And let me have
 Your prayers—your prayers—and be my witnesses,
 That if his life's in peril from my hand,
 'Tis only for the chance of saving it!
 Now, friends, for mercy's sake keep motionless
 And silent.

[TELL shoots, and a shout of wonder and exultation bursts from the crowd. TELL falls on his knees and with difficulty supports himself.]

Ver. *[Rushing in with ALBERT.]* Thy boy is safe; no hair of
 him is touch'd!

Alb. Father, I'm safe—your Albert's safe. Dear father,
 Speak to me! speak to me!

Ver. He cannot, boy!

Alb. You grant him life?

Ges. I do.

Alb. And we are free?

Ges. You are.

Alb. Thank Heaven! thank Heaven!

Ver. Open his vest,
 And give him air.

[ALBERT opens his father's vest, and an arrow drops—TELL starts, fixes his eyes on ALBERT, and clasps him to his breast.]

Tell. My boy! my boy!

Ges. For what

Did you that arrow in your breast? Speak, slave!

Ver. He cannot!—He's o'ercome! *[Whispers to TELL.]*

William, the tyrant stands aloof from all!

Thy deadly aim, alone, transfixes him,

And with him all the rest, through fear for him;

While pace by pace thou canst withdraw;—But gain

A dozen yards, thou'rt free! I'll mind the boy!

Ges. How came that arrow in thy breast? Speak, slave!

Tell. To kill thee, tyrant, had I slain my son!

And now beware ! [TELL suddenly takes aim at GESLER.
Stir thou, or any, stir !
The shaft is in thy heart !

[TELL retreats slowly, while VERNER removes ALBERT.
GESLER and the rest, following TELL with their eyes,
remain in breathless and motionless suspense.

Sar. He shoots !

Ges. O ! [Falls dead, transfixed with the arrow.

Sar. Pursue him !—Hold ! A host of friends have join'd
him,

And all in arms !—They now advance !

Lut. On this side

Another speeds !

Sar. Back to the castle !

Lut. Look ! [MICHAEL and his friends appear on the ramparts.
The castle is betray'd !

Mic. We thank you, friends,
For changing quarters with us !

Sar. Ha !—Shut out !
Surrounded !

[Enter on one side, Swiss, led by TELL, &c., and on the
other, EMMA, followed by Swiss, led by ERNI.

Tell. Yield ! Resistance now is hopeless !

Your lives are spared !—The tyrant's will suffice !
Emma, your child ! We are free, my countrymen !
Our country is free ! Austrians, you'll quit a land,
You never had a right to ; and remember,
The country's never lost, that's left a son
To struggle with the foe that would enslave her !

END OF WILLIAM TELL.

ALFRED THE GREAT;

OR,

The Patriot King:

AN HISTORICAL PLAY.

Dedicated

(BY PERMISSION)

TO

HIS MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY,

WILLIAM THE FOURTH,

A PATRIOT MONARCH,

DESTINED, WITH THE BLESSING OF GOD, TO RESTORE THE DILAPIDATED
FABRIC OF HIS COUNTRY'S PROSPERITY;

AND

TO RESCUE A DEVOTED PEOPLE FROM THE RAVAGES OF THE WORST
OF INVADERS—

CORRUPTION.

June, 1831.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

(AS ORIGINALLY PERFORMED AT DRURY LANE IN 1831.)

ENGLISH.

<i>Alfred</i> , King of England	Mr. MACREADY.
<i>Oddune</i>	Mr. J. VINING.
<i>Oswith</i>	Mr. H. WALLACK.
<i>Edric</i>	Mr. YOUNGE.
<i>Egbert</i>	Mr. THOMPSON.
<i>Kenrick</i>	Mr. COOKE.
<i>Edwy</i>	Mr. SINCLAIR.
<i>Oswald</i>	Mr. CATHIE.
<i>Arthur</i>	Mr. EATON.
<i>Edgar</i>	Mr. HONNER.
<i>Edwin</i>	Mr. FENTON.
<i>Conrad</i>	Mr. HAMMERTON.
<i>Ethelred</i>	Miss MARSHALL.
<i>Soldier</i>	Mr. DOWSLING.

<i>Elswith</i> , the Queen	Miss HUDDART.
<i>Maude</i>	Mrs. C. JONES.

DANES.

<i>Guthrum</i>	Mr. COOPER.
<i>Amund</i>	Mr. BLAND.
<i>Oscar</i>	Mr. C. JONES.
<i>Haldane</i>	Mr. HOWARD.
<i>Otho</i>	Mr. YARNOLD.
<i>Soldier</i>	Mr. HOWELL.
<i>Priest</i>	Mr. S. JAMES.
<i>Boy</i>	Mr. FENTON.

<i>Ina</i> , Guthrum's Daughter	Miss PHILLIPS.
<i>Edith</i>	Miss FAUCIT.

ALFRED THE GREAT.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Danish Camp.*

Enter EDITH with a bow and quiver, followed by INA attended by a Boy, who carries a bow and quiver.

Edith. Come, let us try who'll hit the target first.

Ina. My bow hath got a cast, and will not shoot.

Edith. In sooth your bow hath got no cast at all,
'Tis true as mine. Take mine—I'll shoot with it.

Ina. Yours fits me not—'tis harder far to draw.

Edith. Try it.

Ina. No, no; I will not shoot to-day.

Besides, my arrows all have lost the nock.

Edith. Here's store enough of mine.

Ina. Good Edith, no!

Entreat me not—I will not shoot to-day.

Edith. Why, so 'twas yesterday! Fie, Ina, fie!

To tax thy bow with fault it never had.

The bow that hath a cast is thy changed will,

Thy nockless shafts are marr'd alone by that.

You wot to love this sport! From morn till night

Your pastime 'twas, and now you love it not!

What love you, sweet, instead?

Ina. What should I love?

Edith. Nay, Ina—you alone can answer that.

Has Otho's suit prevail'd?

Ina. When did a flower

Spring from a weed, that love should grow from hate?

Edith. What! call you love a flower? A flower looks gay—

So looks not love! A flower is sweet—Who says

That love is sweet? Does sweetness garner pain

For those that own it? Rather love's a weed

Off taken for a flower—found out at last

With a sigh! O, Ina, you have pluck'd this weed!

Come, own it, Ina!

Ina. Wherefore do you look

Thus at me?

Edith. Why do you, my Ina, look

At anything but me? Why do your eyes

Of late their lustre lavish on the ground,
That cares not for it? And your honey'd breath,
That should be given to your silver tongue
To make sweet music of, why do you waste
Oftener on thankless and contentless sighs?
Come, tell me, Ina, what has happen'd to you?

Ina. Alas! I know not.

Edith. Do you say alas!

O, then, 'tis over with you! Why, you're in tears;
Only the drop's but half-way out, that soon
Would make way for the rest, held not your eye
Its crystal door upon it! Lean your head
Upon the bosom of your friend, and give
Your secret vent—for sure you have one, Ina!

Ina. Not I!—Come, take your bow!—I'll shoot with you!
My quiver 'gainst a shaft, I'll be the first
To hit the mark. Set up the target, boy! [*Boy goes out.*]
Now for the eye of the eye. [*Shoots.*] In sooth I've miss'd,
Wide by a mile—but thou hast shot full home!
I've pluck'd it, Edith, flower or weed. If weed,
O! weed most like a flower.—O precious weed!
There's not a flower so fair, I'd deem thee graced
To call thee by its name!

Boy [*running in*].

The battle's won!
I see our troops come winding up the glen,
Their spears and banners wreath'd—a token, sure,
Of victory. [*Goes out.*]

Edith. Let's meet them, Ina:—Come!
Why, sweet, what's this? How pale you turn! How damp's
Your little hand! Nay, now 'tis snow indeed.
Cold as 'tis white! Did you not rightly hear?
He says the battle's won!

Ina. I know he does!

Edith. Is't with such cheeks you listen to such news?
This would become the daughter of the foe.

Ina. The foe! The foe!

Edith. What! find'st thou something sweet
In that harsh word, that thou repeat'st it thus?

Ina. Harsh word! Now, harsh art thou to call it so;
Jars it thine ear? There's music in't to mine!
Stands it for what thou'dst shun? that's what I'd seek!
Yea! 'fore the things that brother, sister, friend—
Soft titles—stand for! Ina loves a foe!
That foe has lost the battle we have won.

Edith. Why, sweet, where sawest thou this gentle foe?

Ina. Even here. When last the Saxon ask'd a truce,
Curious to see their herald, I remain'd
Behind you in my father's tent. He came!
O, with what grace of rarest manhood! Proud
His gait, yet bearing onwards grace, so bland,

As made all hearts give willing way to him.
 He spake, and I took root to where I stood;
 And so did all. Not Guthrum moved! O Edith,
 How should it be with Ina? Where were her eyes?
 What were her ears about? What did her heart?
 Dost feel it throbbing now? 'Tis quiet, now,
 To what 'twas then! How often have you tried
 To fix your naked eye upon the sun;
 And when you've ta'en it off, how has the day,
 From gazing his bright face, been turn'd to night;
 Flowers, verdure, darken'd; yea, the orb himself
 From burning gold, grown ink. 'Twas so with me
 When sight of him was gone! Night turn'd to day
 Again with you—but light's gone out with Ina
 E'er since the day she look'd upon her foe!

Edith. Hence, Ina, hence awhile! your father comes;
 He must find looks of welcome.

Ina. Have with you.
 You've won my secret, Edith! Guard it for me. [*They go out.*]

Enter GUTHRUM, AMUND, OSCAR, HALDANE, and Danes.

Guth. Halt, comrades, halt! and change your toil for rest,
 And then from rest to feasting! We'll carouse
 A moon for this last victory, that leaves
 No future foe to front us. England's won!
 So thinn'd her sons by this last overthrow,
 And utterly discomfited, enow
 Remain her not to make another stand,
 Durst Alfred rally them—their throneless king!
 We shall not need to cross the main again
 To prop us with fresh succours. Here we'll build
 Another Danish kingdom, fairer far
 Than what we've left! What, ho there! bring me wine!
 I'm thirsty from our march. Ho! wine, I say!
 A seat! Here, in the open air, we'll drink,
 Or ere we part, to our new Denmark. Chief
 And followers shall pledge me. Wine I say!

Enter OTHO.

Otho. Guthrum, your priests prepare a sacrifice.
 The God expects his victims. Shall he have them?

Guth. Take them! You know the God must have his due!
 [*OTHO goes out.*]

Give *him* the wine! my thirst's gone off—yet, no;
 'Tis fit that I drink first. [*Drinks.*] To our new Denmark!
 By Odin! 'twas a glorious victory!
 The God deserves his victims—he shall have them!
 Odin's the God of war! If he drinks blood,
 He has a right. Who dares deny the God
 His victims? Amund, take the cup! We fought
 Like Odin's sons. I saw you, Amund, cleave
 In twain a Saxon at a single blow.

Am. My Lord, 'twas slight to what your falchion did,
That, through the casqué'd head and mail'd chine,
Made way at one dire wheel!

Guth. Ay, did it so?

I do believe it did! No more of that!
Give me your hand, good Amund—For that blow
Lord of a gallant castle shalt thou be.
Pass on the cup to Oscar. Oscar! ha!
Show me thy falchion's edge—Look, Amund, here—
I saw him keep at once five Saxon swords
At bay! Well done!—Oscar, be sure you sit
On my right hand at banquet.

Osc. Mighty chief,

I mark'd your eye was on me! 'twas a sword
That more than balanced all the odds against me!
Besides, your arm, just then, had turn'd the fight,
That seem'd at first against us.

Guth. Was it so?

I don't remember it. Good Oscar, ask
What portion of the spoil thou wilt—'tis thine!

OTHO re-enters.

Otho. The victims, Chief, are ready.

Guth. So! enough!

Otho. Eight of them did we take by lot. The ninth
Is self-devoted to preserve the life
Of one, to whom we were about to hold
The fatal urn.

Guth. Indeed! a chief?

Otho. The port

Of both bespeaks them men of proud degree.

Guth. Have 'em before us; we would see them. [*OTHO*
goes out.] Guthrum

Loves war! Would leave the banquet any time
To mingle in the fight. He loves a friend;
But more than friend's embrace, he loves the hug
Foe gives to foe. Yet is not Guthrum cruel!
His foe disarm'd he never yet could smite!
He likes a noble deed, although the sword
Achieves it not. How say you, friends, were't right
To save the man, who loves his friend so well,
He lays down life for him—although a gift
To Odin?

Am. Ere the priest his sacred hand
Lays on the victim, it has, still, been lawful
To snatch him from his doom!

Hal. Behoves him though

To swear eternal league with Odin's sons.

Guth. He'll do it, Haldane! Ha! I saw thee match'd
In fight, for once. That Saxon found thee, Haldane,
With two that back'd thee, livelier work than suits
A sluggard's hand. Thy seconds both were down—

Was't not so, Haldane?—and thyself, methought,
 Madest rather backward way, when I despatch'd
 Fresh aid to thee, with charge, at any risk,
 To take thy gallant foe alive. 'Twas you,
 Oscar, that I so charged.

Osc. My liege, he lives;
 O'ercome by force that could not make him yield,
 But bore him down to earth, where, as he lay,
 The strife his fetter'd limbs were forced to drop;
 His eye continued still, that shot around
 Deadly defiance in the face of death.

Guth. Foe worthy Guthrum's sword! Was't not the herald,
 Last sent us from the English king?

Osc. The same.

Guth. I'd like to see that man, again!

Osc. He's here.

Enter OTHO, with OSWITH and EDRIC chained.

Guth. This he!—Men's looks reflect their deeds as well
 As nature's. One of these is he, whose thought
 Of lofty friendship overlooks himself,
 When fix'd on his friend's need—This is the man!

Otho. It is, my Lord.

Guth. Is he thy friend, whose life
 Thou count'st a thing so precious, thou wouldst give
 Thine own to purchase it?

Os. He is.

Guth. What rich

And heavy debt hast thou incurr'd to him,
 To pay so large return as takes thy all?

Os. And think'st thou friendship barter kindnesses?
 'Tis not because that such or such a time
 He help'd my purse, or stood me thus or thus
 In stead, that I go bound for him, or take
 His quarrel up! With friends, all services
 Are ever gifts, that glad the donor most!
 Who rates them otherwise, he only takes
 The face of friend to mask a usurer.
 I give my life for him, not for the service
 He did me yesterday, or any day,
 But for the love I bear him every day,
 Nor ask if he returns!

Guth. Be Guthrum's friend,
 Thou livest, and thy friend for sake of thee!

Edr. O, generous proffer!

Os. Wouldst accept it?

Edr. Yes.

Os. Then do.

Guth. Remove their chains.

Os. First take off his.

Guth. Now thine!

Os. Long as my country wears your chains,

Guthrum, beware how you unrivet mine;
 For once you set my arm at liberty,
 The thing which first 'twill seek will be a sword,
 To right my master, royal Alfred's cause—
 And hack my injured country's fetters off!

Guth. Saxon, beware! The smooth and gentle tide
 Of mercy thwarted, turns a torrent, oft
 O'erwhelming as the raging flood itself
 Of vengeance!

Os. Here I stand—let it come down!
 I care not when or where its fury rushes!

Enter INA and EDITH (as yet unperceived by GUTHRUM, &c.).

Ina. [*Aside to EDITH.*] 'Tis he!

Guth. Is Guthrum braved!—Is he the son
 Of Odin!—marches, in his van, the God
 Of War!—lies o'er the humbled necks of hosts
 Of prostrate foes his path; and brooks he thus
 Defiance, and from one earth-sprung—the spawn
 Of the vile clod he treads on! Stood thy king
 Alfred, of whom thou vaunting spokest, stood he
 Where now thou stand'st, his regal eye had fallen
 Beneath the frown of Guthrum.

Os. Not beneath
 The frown of Guthrum's god, were Odin real
 As he is fabled!

Guth. Give him to the God!

Ina. Father!

Guth. My Ina!

Os. Ha! could I believe
 He was not born of earth—*there* were, indeed,
 An argument could make me!

Guth. I have given thee
 Thy choice of life or death—thou choosest death;
 Then take it.

Ina. Father!

Guth. Ah, thou ever art
 My sweet and welcome calm, that glads me, sun-like,
 When summer days are breathless with the joy
 Of his enriching beam.—I'm smooth again!
 Not a ruffle! not a ruffle!—Is he not gone? Hence with him!

Ina. No, no, my father!

Guth. Wouldst thou have me set
 A-foam again!—Nay, Ina, if I rage,
 'Tis not at thee!—Why start away from me?
 Come back, and cling to me again! close, close!
 My child, beloved and only, tell me, if
 Thou canst, how much I love thee!

Otho. Saxon, come.

Ina. No, no!

Guth. How, Ina!

Ina. Thou didst not repeat

Thy order.

Guth. But I will.

Ina. O, speak to me!—

I'm glad the fight is o'er. You won it soon!

You won it safely, else it were not won!

How stood the plume I fasten'd on your crest?

Well! well! How many eyes were on that plume,

Tossing, as proud it rode the stormy wave

Of battle; still the more majestic,

The fiercer wax'd the swell!

Guth. My child, my child!

Ay, every inch my own.—When thou wast born,

I wish'd a son. I would not give thee now

For troops of them!—What, Otho!—

Ina. Your scarf!—Is't whole?

No, no, a rent is here! Come, take it off.

False as it is, you shall not wear't again!

I'll knit you another, every loop of which

I'll fasten with a spell, that it shall prove

An amulet against the thrust of spear,

Or stroke of falchion!

Guth. So you shall! You make

A child of your father! Otho!

Ina. Not a wound!

For ever in the thickest of the fight,

And not a wound! Thank Odin! Yet I would

There were a slight one—for the 'tending on't!

No! no! and yet in sooth I would there were!

I know not what I say! I prate! I prate!

Thank Odin, you are safe!

Guth. My girl! my girl!

My idle girl! my foolish, loving child!

My Ina! What! and have I won the fight,

And shalt not thou become the richer for't?

By Odin, but thou shalt! Come, ask me something!

Name me some gift. Come, measure, if thou canst,

Thy father's love for thee! What wilt thou ask?

Ask me a kingdom! Come?

Ina. No kingdom, father,

I'd ask of thee—only one little boon.

Guth. What is't? Speak out!

Ina. Is't granted?

Guth. By the God!

Out with't—What is't? What little boon is this

Which only wants the naming, to be thine,

And yet thou seem'st to lack the breath to name?

Ina. Is that a rivet of your armour broke?

No, no!

Guth. And if it were, no blame to it.

It turn'd an English javelin. At my feet

The weapon fell: I snatch'd it up again,

And sent it hissing at its master's head!

Enter Soldier.

Soldier. This packet found we, Guthrum, in the tent
Of Alfred.

Guth. Bring'st no tidings of himself?
'Tis certain that he left the field unhurt!
Have they return'd whom in pursuit of him——

Soldier. They have. Three days they track'd him; on the
fourth,

All trace of him was lost; but, by report,
Alone—without a single follower—
The royal fugitive pursues his way,
Broken in hopes, as fortunes.

Guth. We may chance
To overtake yet, or light upon him.

Give me the paper. *[Takes the packet, and reads.]*

Os. Such things I have heard of—angel forms,
Which magic raises—mocking fairest things
Of earth; but fairer—to entrance earth's sons—
Things they would deem of heaven, though found on earth!
Which, once beheld, their helpless functions seize
With ravishment, that leaves them but the power
To gaze or listen, till no warning effort
Of reason, or stronger will avails, to tear
The charmed sense away!

Edr. Would I were chain'd
Again! Her pity makes his freedom poor,
That can't awaken it.

Guth. *[Returning packet.]* It matters not,
A string of Saxon rhymes! Can Alfred fight?
Who flourishes the pen so much, can scarce
Be master of the sword! He plays the harp,
As they report—the harp! Give me the strain
Of the resounding shield! Come, Ina, name
The boon thou'dst ask.

Ina. When thou art happy, what
Most wishest thou?

Guth. That happiness may last.

Ina. No, no! not that. Thou wishest others happy.

Guth. I do! I do!

Ina. And so do I. When I
Am happy, I'd have all things like me—not
That live and move alone, but even such
As lack their faculties. Then could I weep,
That flowers should smile without perception of
The sweetness they discourse. Yea, into rocks
Would I infuse soft sense to fill them with
The spirit of sweet joy, that everything
Should thrill as I do! Then, were I a queen,
I'd portion out my realms among my friends,
Unstud my crown for strangers, and my coffers
Empty in purchasing from foes their frowns,

Till I had bought them out; that all should be
 One reign of smiles around me! I am happy
 To-day—to-day! that brings thee, father, back,
 The hundredth time, in triumph and in safety!
 This day, that smiles so bounteous upon Ina,
 She'd make to smile e'en upon Ina's foe—
 Let not the Saxon die!

Guth. He lives!—My child!

What makes thee gasp?

Ina. How near—How near to you

Was death that day! 'Twas well for Ina that
 Your armour proved so true. She had not else
 A father, now, to ask a boon of, and
 To get it soon as ask'd!

Guth. He lives thy slave!

Had he been wise, he now were Guthrum's friend.

Ina. His chains—

Guth. 'Tis thine to take them off or not.

What Guthrum gives, he gives! He is thy slave.

Come, Saxon, thou art free! [*To EDRIC.*]

[*GUTHRUM and Chiefs go out.*]

Edr. Would I were chain'd

Again.

[*Goes out.*]

Os. I gaze, and with my trancéd eyes

Drink magic in. I know it, still I gaze.

And, yet, can bane reside in aught so sweet?

Can poison lodge in that consummate flower,

Which blends the virtues of all blooming things,

And with the wealth of its fair neighbourhood,

Enriches very barrenness, that near it

Grows sightly, e'en, and sweet?

Ina. How's this, my Edith?

My wish, obtain'd, I tremble to enjoy!

I need but speak the word, and he is free;

Yet, there I let him stand in shackles still,

Whose chains to doff, were there no other way,

I'd go in bonds myself.—Sweet, be my tongue;

Bid them remove his chains.

Edith. Unbind him, there!

Soldier. My hand is useless, from the fight to-day.

Ina. Try you!

Edith. [*Trying to take off his chains.*] It baffles me! It hath
 a knack

I am not mistress of.—Will you not try?

[*INA approaches, and takes off his chains.*]

You've done't.—Why, what's the matter with you, Ina?

Hast put his fetters on, that here you stand

As though bereft of motion? Rouse thee, Ina!

Ina. O, for a minute, Edith, in thy bosom,

To weep there! Ay, to weep!—to shed such tears

As shower down smiling cheeks, when sudden joy

Pours in to the o'erfilling of the heart,

That look'd not for't; and knows not what to do
With all its treasure!

Os. I do feel it still!

Still do I feel the touch of her fair hand!
How passing fair! The driven snow itself
Might make as white a one; but then, again,
As cold, as that is glowing! Who will loose
The fetters it puts on? Or, who that wears them,
Would sigh for the embrace of liberty!
Truth! honour! all is lapsed. O, for a foe
To taunt me now!—O, for a flourish of
The Danish trump!

Ina. Saxon, wilt follow us?

Os. I come, sweet maid! What am I but your slave,
To follow, though I leave all else that's bright? [*They go out.*]

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A wild tract of Country on the border of a Wood.*

Enter ELSWITH, in wretched attire, presently followed by
CONRAD.

Con. No farther!

Els. Yes!

Con. Alas, I can no more!

My lapsed strength constrains my limbs to play
The traitor to you!

Els. What! and thou fall off?

Well! I am left at last alone! Old man,
Think not that I'd upbraid thee. Thanks to thee
For what thou'st done; for what thou canst not do
No blame to thee, but pity for thee! More
I know my desolation is thy loss
Than mine! Back, prithee, to the hut we've left;
Thou hast strength enough to crawl there.

Con. What I have

I'll turn to worthier profit. [*Makes a violent effort, and*
snatches hold of her robe.] Oh! my loved,
My honour'd mistress! do not tempt these wilds,
Where hunger turns its aching eyes around
In vain!—Where prowls, perchance, the savage wolf!
Where—

Els. Peace!—Talk terror to the dead! Not less
Wouldst thou be heeded. I've a heart as dull,
Except one fear—one hope—to find my Alfred,
Or search for him in vain! There I'm alive!
There, only! Counsel should not come from thee,

Whose tongue persuaded what thy arm enforced,
 Desertion of my child! whose fate to avert,
 A mother's duty 'twas; or, else, to share!
 And now thou'dst urge desertion of his sire!
 I wonder not thy limbs are weak—thy heart
 Not in the cause! and yet it is a king's!
 But thou'rt his subject only; I'm his wife—
 So doubly bound to him. Back to the hut!
 They'll take compassion on thee! Fare thee well!

Con. Nay, pause in mercy! See who comes—alas!
 Should they be Danes!—Yon thicket will conceal us—
 For thy own safety!—Come!—Alas, the help
 I fain would give, I stand, myself, in need of! [*They retire.*]

Enter EDWY, ARTHUR, and other Saxons.

Edwy. We've rounded now the forest on the east,
 And, by the sun, our friends should meet us soon,
 Who gird the other side. A halt, awhile.

Arth. But should we miss the King—if still he lives
 Nor yet is captured, as 'tis rumour'd—He
 May pass our band unknown; by none of us
 Beheld, except at distance, when, of late,
 He marshal'd us, to lead us 'gainst the foe.

ELSWITH rushes forward.

Els. Seek ye your king?

Edwy. Who art thou?

Els. Friend, your leader,
 Until you find him!

Arth. She's distracted!

Edwy. Yes.

It can't be reason's light which shines so fierce
 In her unquiet eye, which misses naught,
 Yet rests on nothing!

Els. I command you, Sirs,
 On your allegiance follow me. Obey
 Your queen!

Arth. Our queen?

Edwy. Pshaw, Arthur, such a queen,
 As frenzy often makes! Come on!—Come on!
 Our friends will mock us, should they chance to reach
 The point agreed upon before us. [*EDWY and party go out.*]

Els. Stay!

Con. [*Appearing, and struggling to advance.*] Stay, country-
 men! It is indeed your queen.

Alas! they hear me not! My tongue hath wax'd
 As feeble as my limbs. [*Leans against a tree.*]

Els. Why, let them go!

They are not half the band, that I have, here,
 In loyalty to my liege wedded lord!
 With that, I'll seek him, under Heaven's high guard!
 Yea, though I search the quarters of the foe!

In that find strength—find courage! That my food,
My rest! Farewell, old man! Heaven shelter thee!
And be thy mistress' guide. [Goes out.]

Con. Stay!—Hear me!—Stay!
I'll drag my limbs along, to follow thee. [Goes out.]

SCENE II.—*A Hut.*

ALFRED discovered trimming some arrows, with an unfinished bow beside him—MAUDE kneading flour for cakes.

Maude. [*Aside.*] Ay, there he's at his work! if work be that,
Which spareth toil. He'll trim a shaft, or shape
A bow with any archer in the land;
But neither can he plough, nor sow!—I doubt
If he can dig—I am sure he cannot reap—
He has hands and arms, but not the use of them!
Corin!

Alf. Your will?

Maude. Would thou couldst do my will
As readily as ask it! Go to the door;
And look if Edwin comes. Dost see him?

Alf. No.

Maude. Bad omen that! He'll bring an empty creel;
Else, were he home ere now. Put on more wood;
And lay the logs on end! You'll learn in time
To make a fire! Why, what a litter's there,
With trimming of your shafts that never hit!
'Ten days ago you kill'd a sorry buck;
Since when, your quiver you have emptied, thrice,
Nor ruffled hair nor feather.

Alf. If the game
Are scarce and shy, I cannot help it.

Maude. Out!
Your aim, I wot, is shy, your labour scant!
There's game enow, wouldst thou but hunt for them;
And when you find them, hit them! What expect'st
To-day, for dinner?

Alf. What Heaven sends!

Maude. Suppose
It sends us nought?

Alf. Its will be done!

Maude. You'd starve?
So would not I, knew I to bend a bow,
Or cast a line! See if thou hast the skill
To watch these cakes, the while they toast.

Alf. I'll do
My best.

Maude. Nor much to brag of, when all's done! [Goes out.]

Alf. [*solus.*] This is the lesson of dependence. Will
Thankless, that brings not profit; labour, spurn'd,

That sweats in vain ; and patience, tax'd the more,
 The more it bears !—And taught unto a king—
 Taught by a peasant's wife, whom fate hath made
 Her sovereign's mistress. She little knows
 At whom she rails ; yet is the roof her own ;
 Nor does she play the housewife grudgingly.
 Give her her humour ! So ! How stands the account
 'Twixt me and fortune ?—We are wholly quits !—
 She dress'd me—She has stripp'd me !—On a throne
 She placed me—She has struck me from my seat !
 Nor in the respect where sovereigns share alike
 With those they rule, was she less kind to me—
 Less cruel ! High she fill'd for me the cup
 Of bliss connubial—She has emptied it !
 Parental love she set before me too,
 And bade me banquet ; scarce I tasted, ere
 She snatch'd the feast away ! My queen—My child !—
 Where are they ? 'Neath the ashes of my castle !
 I sat upon their tomb one day—one night.
 Then, first, I felt the thralldom of despair !
 The despot, he ! He would not let me weep !
 There were the fountains of my tears as dry
 As they had never flow'd ! To bursting swell'd
 My heart ; and yet no sigh would he let forth
 With vent to give it ease ! There had I sat
 And died—But Heaven a stronger tyrant sent—
 Hunger, that wrench'd me from the other's grasp,
 And dragg'd me hither ! This is not the lesson
 I set myself to con !

Re-enter MAUDE.

Maude. 'Tis noon, and yet
 No sign of Edwin ! Dost thou mind thy task ?
 Look to't ! and when the cakes are fit to turn,
 Call, and I'll come !

Alf. I'll turn them, dame.

Maude. You will ?
 You'll break them !—Know I not your handy ways ?
 I would not suffer thee put finger to them !
 Call, when 'tis time. You'll turn the cakes, forsooth !
 As likely thou couldst make the cakes as turn them !

[*Goes out.*]

Alf. So much for poverty ! Adversity's
 The nurse for kings ;—but then the palace gates
 Are shut against her !—They would, else, have hearts
 Of mercy oft'ner—gems, not always, dropp'd
 In fortune's golden cup. What thought hath he
 How hunger warpeth honesty, whose meal
 Still waited on the hour ? Can he perceive
 How nakedness converts the kindly milk
 Of nature into ice, to whom each change
 Of season—yea, each shifting of the wind,

Presents his fitting suit? Knows he the storm
That makes the valiant quail, who hears it only
Through the safe wall, its voice alone can pierce;
And there talks comfort to him with the tongue,
That bids, without, the shelterless despair?
Perhaps he marks the mountain wave, and smiles
So high it rolls!—while on its fellow hangs
The fainting seaman glaring down at death
In the deep trough below! Let me extract
Riches from penury; from sufferings
Blessings; that if I e'er assume again
The sceptre, I may be the more a king
By being more a man!

*MAUDE re-enters, goes towards the fire, lifts the cakes, goes to
ALFRED, and holds them to him.*

Maude. Is this your care?
Ne'er did you dream that meal was made of corn?
Which is not grown until the earth be plough'd;
Which is not garner'd up until 'tis cut;
Which is not fit for use until 'tis ground;
Nor used then till kneaded into bread!
Ne'er knew you this? It seems you never did,
Else had you known the value of the bread;
Thought of the ploughman's toil, the reaper's sweat,
The miller's labour, and the housewife's thrift;
And not have left my barley cakes to burn
To very cinders!

Alf. I forgot, good dame!

Maude. Forgot, good dame!—Forgot! You ne'er forgot
To eat my barley cakes! [*Knock.*] Open the door!

*MAUDE sets the cakes on the table, where she had been kneading
them; ALFRED opens the door.*

Alf. An aged man!

Maude. Come in—[*Enter an Old Man.*] What want you?

Old Man. Food!

Maude. Want calls on want, when you look here for food!

Old Man. Good dame, to say I have not tasted food
Since morning yesterday, is not to speak
My need more urgent than it is.

Maude. Whate'er
Thy need, we cannot minister to it—
Seek richer quarters.

Alf. Stay! He's in the gripe
Of straitest want! There's food, and give it him!

Maude. What! when we've scanty stock for three days
more!

Alf. We breakfasted this morning; yesternight
We supp'd, and noon ere then had seen us dine.
Since yesternorn he has not touch'd a meal!
Who'er lacks food, 'tis now his turn to eat.

This portion would be mine—I'll go without !
 Here!—Here!—Good dame, the hand which gave us that
 Will not more sparing of its bounty be
 For using thus its gift ! The hand that fed
 So many thousands with what only seem'd
 Provision for a few, can, also, make
 The remnant answer us for many a meal !

Old Man. O strong in faith !—In mercy rich ! Whoe'er
 Thou art, that hand is with thee ! Wast thou great,
 And art thou now brought low ?—'twill make thy fall,
 Thy rise—thy want, abundance—thy endurings,
 Enjoyings—and thy desolation, troops
 Of friends and lovers, countless ! Does the storm
 Hold on ? Ne'er heed it ! There's the sun behind,
 That, with effulgence, double, shall break through,
 And make thee cloudless day ! [Goes out.]

Maude. A poor man's wish,
 They say, is better than a rich man's gift.
 If house and lands thou'st lost, I would not say
 But thou mayst get them back again ; with roof
 Enlarged, and acres grown. Yet lands and house
 To come, are not so good as bread in hand,
 And that thou'st given away,—if Edwin speeds
 No better than he did yesterday !

Alf. Ne'er fear—
 These arrows when I've trimm'd, and strung this bow,
 I'll find thee out a garner in these wilds
 To dress the table still !

Maude. I'd rather trust
 A peck of barley meal to furnish it !

Edwin [without]. What, ho ! within !

Maude. 'Tis Edwin's voice !

Edwin [without]. Within !

Open the door !

Maude. Thank Providence, his hands
 Have something else to do ! [Opens the door.]

Edwin. [Entering with a sack.] Provision, wife !
 A month's subsistence ! Take it in, and ply
 Thy housewifery ; for friends must eat of it—
 Guests, sure of welcome, who supply the board
 They ask their hosts to spread—a gallant troop
 Of countrymen, for common safety link'd,
 And wand'ring through the land, with hopes, they say,
 To learn some tidings of their king ; and if
 They find him, list themselves beneath his banner,
 And face the Dane again. [MAUDE goes out.]

Alf. [Aside.] The land's not lost
 That's left a son to struggle for't ! The king
 That's firmly seated in his people's hearts—
 His proper throne—although supplanted, reigns.

Edwin. [Going to the door.] In ! in !

Enter EGBERT, KENRICK, ARTHUR, EDWY, OSWALD, and others, variously armed.

Eg. Thanks, friend!

Edwin. No thanks, good sirs, to me,
You're guests the frugal'st host might entertain,
Who cater for yourselves. Sit down! The board
Shall soon be cover'd.

Eg. And we bring a cup
To cheer it with, with richer beverage
Than what the fountain yields, replenish'd. Bring
A flagon, worthy host—

Ken. [*Aside to* ARTHUR.] Commend him to
A cover'd board and brimming cup! He's fit
To play the leader there;—but he's no head
For men like us, that rise betimes from meat,
And wish for busy hands! I'm weary on't!

Arth. [*Aside to* KENRICK.] And so am I! and, trust me, of
our minds

Are many more!

Ken. To lead a life of shifts
That we may dine in safety! I'll no more on't!
Give me a skirmish!

Arth. Tell him so!

Ken. I will,
Ere I touch food, again! [*Returns with* ARTHUR.]

Eg. [*To* ALFRED.] Is it a bow
You shape?

Alf. It is.

Eg. I pray you show it me. [*Beckoning* ALFRED.]

Alf. [*Rising and coming forward.*] Here.

Eg. [*Struck with the appearance of* ALFRED.] I did wrong to
call you from your seat.

Alf. No wrong is done where none is meant.

Eg. You make
The trespass greater, so excusing it!
Lodge you beneath this roof?

Alf. I do.

Eg. [*Aside.*] I've met
With men whose air and faces almost told
Their histories, that I could say, "Now this
Was such, or such, a man—such course of life,
Or such, pursued—this kind of acts, or that,
Perform'd." His dress, alone, bespeaks the peasant.
Change it for e'en the richest, he would seem
Far more, indeed, at home!

Alf. You'd see the bow?

Eg. [*Mechanically taking, and almost at the same time re-
turning it.*] Your pardon! I forgot! I humbly
thank you! [*ALFRED returns to his seat.*]

Enter MAUDE, with cakes, which she lays on the table, while one of EGBERT's party enters with a flagon, and sets it down.

Maude. This bread will serve till more is ready, friends.

[Goes out.]

Eg. Sit down.

Ken. Sit down who will, I'll not sit down !

Arth. Nor I !

Osw. Nor I !

Eg. Why ? what's amiss ?

Ken. We loathe

To lead this wary life. The very deer
Confess the covert irksome, and at times
Betake them to the plain.

Eg. Not when they hear
The hunters are abroad ! Sit down ! Sit down !

Ken. We'll not sit down, till 'tis determined who
Shall head the table !

Eg. I shall head it !

Ken. Ay ?

Edwy. And wherefore should he not ?

Ken. Go to ! Go to !

You question far too bold for one so young.

Edwy. I question in the right, and so am bold
Far less than thou, that question'st in the wrong !

Ken. The wrong ?—Thou'rt but a boy !

Edwy. The boy that proves
Himself a man, does all a man can do.

Ken. Beware thou dost not prove thyself on me,
My metal's temper'd—thine, at best, but raw !
Before thy chin exchanged its coat of down
For one of manlier fashion, I had shown
A beard in twenty fields !

Eg. No more of this !

The post by lot is mine. I got it not
Of mine own choice ; nor, yet, by partial leave.
It fell to me. It might have fallen to you,
To him, or him—to any one—and then—
No matter ! If, by fearing to be rash,
And overshoot the mark, my shaft hath lit
O'er-short on't, I am content a better bow
Should lead the game.

Edwy. It shall not be ! We'll have
No other leader ! Sides, Sirs, sides !

Ken. Come on !

When they've such stomach for't, 'twere strange if we
Lack'd appetite. Come on !

Alf. *[Rushing in between them as they are on the point of encountering.]* Hold !—Stop !—Which side's
The Dane ? I stand for England ! Can it be ?
You're Saxons all ! What ! Are your foes so few
You make ones of each other ? Fie, Sirs ! Fie !

Arth. [*To KENRICK.*] Who's he ?

Ken. I know not.

Alf. [*To KENRICK.*] You're a soldier ?

Ken. Yes.

Alf. Whose sword is that you draw ?

Ken. My own.

Alf. Your country's !

You took it, with an oath to use it 'gainst

Her foes, and do you turn it on her sons ?

For shame !

Arth. Why bear you his rebuke ?

Alf. [*To ARTHUR.*] And you ?

Arth. A soldier too !

Alf. [*To OSWALD.*] And you ?

Osw. The same !

Alf. Beneath whose banner shot you arrow last ?

Arth. and *Osw.* The king's.

Alf. And take you aim at the king's liege ?

As well the king himself ! What ! do you stand

With graspéd weapons still ? Or do you look

For signal here ?—Old soldier, why is this ?

Is't thus you use your battle-temper'd sword ?

Is that the rust of Danish blood upon't ?

These hacks—are they the thrusts of Danish blades ?

Ne'er hath it met the foe that master'd it ?

Ne'er hath it fail'd the friend that call'd upon it ?

Still did it guard thy country while it could ?

Yet would it back thy king, did he command ?

And wouldst thou tarnish it ? [*KENRICK hangs his head.*]

The field, the field,

You drew it last in ?—Ha !—You start at that !

Remember you who won that field ? You do !

His shout is in thine ear again ! Thine eye

Beholds him scattering carnage through the ranks

Of those that fled !—The Saxon then was down !—

What ! tighten you your grasp, till, with the strain,

Your weapon trembles ? Keep it for the Dane,

And put it, stainless, up !

[*KENRICK sheathes his sword—ARTHUR and OSWALD unbend their bows—The rest follow the example.*]

Eg. [*Aside.*] What man is this,

That lacks all sign and title of command,

Yet all obey ?

Edwy. We're friends again ?

Ken. Content !

Eg. A cup, then, to our making up.—Sit down.—

A pledge for concord, friends—The king ! [*Drinks.*]

All. The king ! [*Drinking successively.*]

Eg. I pray you, Edwy, sing those rhymes for us,

You've strung so well, and we so love to hear.

Edwy. Right willingly. Though homely be the verse,

I dare be sworn was ne'er more rich in heart.

[Sings.]

When, circling round the festive board,
 The cup is fill'd the highest ;
 And one and all their love record
 For him their thought's the nighest ;
 Who owns the name their lips pronounce,
 While vouching tear-drops spring, Sirs,
 In eyes he does not see ? At once
 I'll tell you—Here's "The King," Sirs !
 When, proud in arms, the nation stood,
 To front the foul invader ;
 And England did what England could,
 And fate alone betray'd her ;
 Who was the foremost to advance,
 The first a spear to fling, Sirs,
 The last to quit the field ? At once
 I'll tell you—Here's "The King," Sirs !
 And, now, when, o'er the prostrate land,
 The spoiler roams resistless ;
 And Vengeance fears to lift her brand,
 And Hope almost is listless ;
 Whence does the beam of solace glance,
 The song of heart'ning ring, Sirs,
 And promise freedom yet ? At once
 I'll tell you—Here's "The King," Sirs !

Eg. Well sung.*Edwy.* What's well intended, scarce comes short,
 Howe'er performance halts—I did my best.

Alf. My heart o'erflows !—I shall betray myself !
 What could my palace boast to vie with this ?
 Not for its carved roof would I now exchange
 These rafters, 'neath whose shelter—vanquish'd, stripp'd
 Of crown and sceptre—I am still a king—
 My people's hearts my throne !

Eg. What trumpet's that ?*Arth.* [Going to the door.] I'll see.*Ken.* I know.*Eg.* Whose is it ?*Ken.* 'Tis the Dane's !

I know his flourish well ! Let's out, and meet him !
 Is't not the Dane ? [To ARTHUR, who returns.

Arth. It is ! They're close upon us !—

A quick retreat !—Their numbers double ours !

[All start up except ALFRED.]

Alf. No more ?*Arth.* No more !—What can we, one to two ?

[ALFRED rises, looks sternly at him for a moment, and goes out hastily, in an opposite direction.]

Eg. Why goes he ?*Arth.* For his safety to provide.

Let us provide for ours by instant flight.

Ken. He's not the man to fly! My life upon it,
 He'll never turn his back upon the foe!—
 I told you so! [*ALFRED returns, armed with sword and target.*
Alf. What distance off's the Dane?
Arth. Scarce half a mile by this!
Alf. [*To himself.*] The wood's to pass.
 Unseen we can approach, and set upon them,
 All unprepared for us. Divide your band!
 [*They mechanically obey him, alternately looking at*
each other and at ALFRED, with an expression of
wonder and inquiry.
 Half with your leader go; and half with me!
 [*EGBERT mechanically heads one of the divisions.*
 Ours be it to charge! They're sure to waver. Then
 Our shout your signal be to second us!
 My bounding heart presages victory!
 And so I see does yours, old soldier. [*To KENRICK.*] Come,
 There be our first trust; and our second here!
 Say, would you back your king?—Follow your king!
 [*ALFRED and EGBERT go out, the rest enthusiastically*
following.

SCENE III.—*The Country, interspersed with Wood.*

Enter ODDUNE, EDGAR, Chiefs, and Soldiers.—EDGAR bearing
the standard of the Ræfen.

Od. Halt, comrades! Here we'll take our noon's repast.
 This velvet sward will be our pleasant couch,
 To rest us from our toil. And lose not heart!
 We'll find our Alfred yet! What, though our search
 Has hitherto proved vain? When look'd for least,
 Perchance we'll light upon him. Fortune's smiles,
 Like fortune's frowns, when once they come, come thick!
 Our expedition fairly has begun,
 Fairly proceeded, and will fairly end!

Edg. Know you these parts?

Od. Right well. You stand in Mercia;
 Where, as that aged lonely man surmised,
 A monarch's head beneath a peasant's roof
 Contented shelters. [*Shout.*] Hark! the cry of onset!
 From thence it comes! Guard you the spoil! The rest,
 That choose it, follow me!

[*ODDUNE and Saxons go out—EDGAR and Saxons remain.*

Edg. Hie after them,
 And bring me word what's passing. If the Dane,
 My life upon't, again he bites the dust! [*Soldier goes out.*
 Another shout! The contest's close at hand! [*Shouts.*
 I hear the clashing of their weapons,—Well?
 [*Soldier re-enters.*

Soldier. The Dane is overthrown! Our countrymen
Alone achieved the victory! He fled,
Ere full we came in sight. Some man of note
Is added to our band, for soon as met
Our mighty chief embraced him!

Enter ODDUNE, ALFRED, EGBERT, and Party, with ODDUNE's following.

Od. Countrymen,
Behold your king!

Alf. Rise! rise! my gallant friends.
We're brothers struggling in one common cause,
And by Heaven's high appointment haply met!

Od. Haply indeed! Thus at your feet I lay
The standard of the Dane!

*[Takes the Danish standard from EDGAR and lays it
at ALFRED's feet.]*

Alf. What! more success!
My faithful Earl! what chance has brought thee hither?
Whence comest thou?

Od. From my castle, which the Danes
Beset, commanded by the brother chiefs
Hinguar and Hubba, by whose sister's skill
Was wrought that standard, call'd their fatal Rafen;
Whose ominous device, they idly feign'd,
Upon the eve of victory would flap
Its magic-woven wings. It seem'd, indeed,
As if death rode upon them, marking us,
His prey; for famine plied us worse within,
Than e'en the foe without. But 'twas a friend,
Severe, to do us good! Despairing succour,
And all munition gone, at night we made
A sally, all resolved to cut our way
Through the enemy, or perish sword in hand!
The Dane was unprepared—before our march
Startled his ear, our swords were at his breast!
My liege, you may believe, the weapons, which
Despair first drew, were wielded now by Hope;
Escape was certain; but would he escape
Whom danger woo'd with chance of victory?
We fought for it; and won it!

Alf. Fair exploit!

Od. Of fairer yet, the news of our success,
My liege, gives hope. Such numbers throng'd to us
Upon our march, the handful, that I thought
To greet you with, has swell'd into a host—
Brave volunteers, whose pay's the leave to serve!
My liege, your queen and son?

Alf. Oddune, forbear!
The Dane has buried them—They sleep beneath
The ruins of thy master's castle, in
The flames of which they perish'd, Oddune! From

A dying follower I learn'd it! Learn'd,
That treason led the accursed assailants on!
If lips that speak for the last time, speak truth,
Edric has proved a traitor! Queen and child,
Except my country, Oddune, I have none—
That, now, is Alfred's all!—His all, for which
Alone he cares to live! Now, could we learn
The state and numbers of the enemy,
A blow might soon be struck—Oddune!—

Od. My liege.

Alf. [*To himself.*] No—that were doubtful—Oddune.

Od. Well, my liege?

Alf. [*To himself.*] And so were that!

Od. My liege, you spoke just now.

Alf. Anon, my Oddune! Make the attempt myself?
Yes! Life and empire on this cast I'll stake!
But how provide myself? There is a place
In the glen, where, of its shaggy vesture scant,
Its sides stand bare, and their huge ribs expose
Of solid rock; so giddy steep withal,
That down direct from the precipitous verge
You many fathoms look.—There have I mark'd
A lonely wight at the bottom couch'd, with harp
Playing to the idle echoes by the hour,
Admiring how they mock'd him—I will use
That harp!—will use it to expel the foe,
That thrust its master from the shining hall
To the dim cavern-cell; spill'd his heap'd dish—
O'erturn'd his cup, from all sides running o'er,
And cast him, with that golden song of his,
To roots and water,—Edwy, speak with me!
Wilt be awhile companion to thy king,
Though to share danger with him?

Edwy. To share death.

Alf. Your hand! My friends, our country must be free!
My trusty Oddune, wonder not, although
You've found your king, to lose him for a time.
This list of trusty chiefs, with whom, through means
I need not name to thee, I have kept up
Intelligence, will show thee whom to warn
Of thy success. Summon them to repair
To Selwood forest, there to meet their king.
There shall we meet again, my gallant friends!
Your hands, my chiefs! Soldiers, our hearts embrace!
Farewell! Be strong in hope! The land's not lost
That's left a son resolved to do her right;
And here are troops of sons, and loyal ones!
Confirm the stirring spirit of the time
Till it o'erspread the realm; the which, throughout,
With swiftest expedition bear the call
That to her rescue rouses those that love her!
Strong in her children should a mother be!

Shall ours be helpless that has sons like us ?
 God save our native land, whoever pays
 The ransom that redeems her !—though the king !
 There king and subject side by side shall stand !
 Stand by your king, your king will stand by you !

[ALFRED and EDWY go out. ODDUNE and the others severally.]

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The inside of Guthrum's Tent.*

Enter GUTHRUM and EDRIC.

Guth. I swear a royal booty ! Thou hast done
 Great service to the Dane. With these supplies
 No need to forage. Here we'll sit at ease,
 And rest us from the war.

Edr. No rest for me !
 Far richer holds than those which I surprised
 And plunder'd, at my master's feet shall lay
 Their treasure and munition.

Guth. At thy friend's !
 Call me not master ! Call me father ! Think
 To thy first expedition what we owe !—
 The capture of the royal Saxon's son,
 The heir of Alfred !

Edr. Would his queen, as well,
 Were now within thy power !—But she escaped,
 Or perish'd in the flames.

Guth. Come, Edric !—speak ;
 What shall I give thee to reward the love,
 That so hath labour'd to enrich me ? Come,
 Ask what thou wilt, by Odin it is thine.

Edr. Thou badest me call thee father. With the leave
 Give me the right to hail thee by that title.
 I ask thy daughter's hand.

Guth. I give it thee.
 Seek her, and bring her hither.

Edr. For that boon
 Command my blood ! Ay, every drop of it.

[*Goes out.*]

Enter HALDANE.

Hal. My Lord, a Saxon minstrel is without :
 The string he touches with a master's hand ;
 And as he plays, a youth that waits upon him,
 Sings to his harp rare tales of love and war
 As ever gladden'd ear !

Guth. Conduct him hither.

[*HALDANE goes out, and returns with ALFRED, followed by EDWY. GUTHRUM, who had sat down, struck by the deportment of ALFRED, rises.*

Guth. Ha! who art thou? What art thou?

Alf. I'm the bard.

The son of fantasy,
Whose world's o' the air—to mortal vision else
Impalpable—a paragon to this!—
Where he communes with forms, whose radiancy
Outshines the lustre of earth's fairest things!
Whose title, from above, earth can't confer
Or take away! whose smile is coveted
By beauty—valour—their bright mirror, where
They see themselves more bright! whose tributaries
Are kings themselves; whose gorgeous state but serves
To swell his strain, that doth emblazon them
Beyond their deeds or titles!

Guth. Well replied;
I like thy answer better, that 'tis bold!
Sit down, sit down.—A sample of your skill.—
Thou spokest of beauty now,—What canst thou say
In praise of it?

Alf. [*To himself.*] Thanks to the tender hand
That guided me to con the minstrel's lore,
And treasure't in my heart!

Guth. Let's taste thy skill.

ALFRED.

Wouldst thou know what beauty is?
Beauty is the queen of sighs!
Not a heart but owneth this,
Proud or humble, light or wise.
Crown'd goblets some desire;
Some to see the banquet spread;
Some prize shining gold; and higher
Value some the shining deed;
Safety's deem'd a gem by some;
Danger, some a jewel call;
Some to power desire to come;
But beauty is the prized of all!
Well the Bard her praise may sing—
Of his soul-entrancing lyre,
She commands the master-string,
That which lends it all its fire!
Wanting which he could not sing—
Rhymeless, numberless, might be,
Nor e'er had won a name for deathless minstrelsy.

Guth. Right well thou provest thy title to thy name.
What does the youth that waits upon thee?

Alf. Sing,
The while I play.

Guth. We'll hear him at the banquet.
 Thou art not old—and, yet, thou look'st not young;
 Thy brow with wisdom graver than with years—
 I'd talk with you; for great, unless I err,
 Your skill in lore, we little care to search
 Whose school's the battle-field. Attend me! Come.
[Exeunt.]

SCENE II.—*A sequestered rural spot near the Camp.*

Enter INA (leading ETHELRED), EDITH, and Boy.

Edith. Your little charge is a fair healthful plant,
 Whose thriving looks bespeak your careful tending.
 How strong is infancy in its helplessness!
 Of all that dwelt within the hold where he
 Was found, no soul, they say, was spared but him,
 'Howe'er they pray'd for mercy!

Ina. Little praise
 To him that saved him! Edric's treacherous heart
 Can own no touch of mercy! Know you not
 The boy is Alfred's son? His hold it was,
 Which Edric with my father's host beset,
 When found the chief this boy. Go on before,
 We'll follow you; and mind you spare no pains
 To humour him. *[To Boy, who goes out with ETHELRED.]*
 I should not love thee, boy:
 Thy race is Ina's bane!

Edith. Why say'st thou so?
 The Saxon loves thee, Ina.

Ina. Loves me?

Edith. Yes!
 What, though his passion is not on his tongue;
 His heart is full of it. It speaks in sighs—
 Love's proper words. Ne'er plainer spoke to ear!
Ina. Nay, tell me not. His heart is stone to me!
 He sighs! but 'tis for freedom!

Edith. 'Tis for you!
 How love is blind to what it pines to see!
 You think him stone; belike so thinks he you.
 Couldst see thyself, thou wouldst at once see him!
 Your eyes, at parting, that strain after him,
 At meeting, feast on any other thing;
 Your tongue, that, when he hears not, rings with him,
 In his hearing's noteless, as it ne'er knew sound.
 For too strong love, his love's accounted none.

Ina. I tell thee, no! His thoughts abide not here.
 They're with his countrymen, some daughter fair
 Of whom he loves—not Ina.—Be it so!
 The cheek I love shall smile, though not on me!
 The bird, I'd keep with me, I will let go,

And free from bondage that would kill with doating.
He's free—My father gives him liberty.

Edith. And what for thee ? *

Ina. To die, like a poor flower
That lives with only gazing on the sun ;
But from her radiant lord too long shut out
By the cold cloud, in silence hangs her head,
And dies a smiling death !

Edith. He comes.

Ina. Alas,
For the last time !

OSWITH enters, perceiving INA.

Os. Still, still, my treacherous steps
Betray me, leading me to what I'd shun ;
Yet what is ever present to my thought
Why fears my eye to see ? My thralldom's full—
If 'tis enchantment, better to enjoy
The fatal sweetness of the powerful spell
I strive in vain to break !

Ina. Saxon, thou'rt free.

Os. Recall thy words !

Ina. I speak my father's will.

Os. Why does he give me liberty ?

Ina. Because

His Ina begg'd the boon.

Os. Why did she so ?

Would she had begg'd my death ! I did not ask
For freedom ;—thralldom was more kind to me,
Which chain'd me unto that I ought to fly,
But fain would cling to ! Honour did not swerve
That was constrain'd to look upon its bane ;
And if it look'd till it forgot itself,
'Twas its mischance—not crime.—Now, if it falls,
It falls of its own will ! O maid, too fair !
Help me to 'scape the ruin thou hast wrought !
Think—think—'tis an apostate kneels to thee !
Instruct thy melting eye to flash with scorn—
Teach thy sweet tongue harsh indignation's note—
Erect thy form with dread severity—
Till, like a seraph, sterner in thy frown
For what thou look'st and breath'st of beauteous heaven,
Thou awest me into virtue !

Ina. Wouldst thou be free,
Thou art so !

Os. Am I ? Lady, there are bonds,
The wearing which endears them to the slave,
So that he hugs them—would not be set free !
Free me from these !

Ina. What bonds ?

Os. E'en such, as not
Our limbs imprison, but the things that rule them—

Our thoughts and wills—as coil about our hearts,
And keep their hold, when links of steel were wax.

Ina. Methinks I have a guess what bonds you mean!
Are they not heavy ones when worn, alone,
But light when others share them? Is it so?
Hadst thou such partnership, wouldst thou be free?
I would not, so had I!

Os. It cannot be!
Half she reveals her heart, and veils her eyes.
Do her veil'd eyes unveil the other half?
Am I so bless'd, so curs'd, as to be loved?
Nay, then, 'tis fate I'd cope with, and must yield!
Oh, to have fallen in battle!—to have fallen
When honour was my mistress!—to have fallen
When in her radiant eye I drew my sword,
And deem'd my life a stake not worth a thought
To venture for her smile!—when wooing her,
I strode more blithely through the battle-field,
Than e'er I bounded down the festive hall!

Ina. What makes thee wish for death?
Os. The dread to lose
What was my more than life; but now seems poor—
Like to be cast away, since I have found
A good I covet more than life and it!

Ina. What dost thou covet so?
Os. Thee, lady, thee!
Thou art that good of value paramount!
Oh, to have met thee with a heart at large!
No solemn debt—no knotted tie upon it!
Free to be all thy own—to render thee
Its whole of love, hope, honour, loyalty—
One large, unbroken, everlasting gift—
The hand which now, in doubtful joy, I take—
How had I caught in tranced ecstasy,
And kneeling, laid the offering at thy feet!

Enter EDRIC.

Edr. Let go that hand! 'Tis mine!
Os. What fire is this,
That like the lightning darts through me, and feels
As all-consuming!—Thine!

Ina. Believe him not.
Oswith, believe him not—believe the maid
That all forgets herself with thought of thee,
Casts off the bashful 'tire of virginhood,
And, unenforced, confesses she's thine own!—
The eyes turn on thee she would still avert,
And lets thee see them, though they stream with love!—
Calls on thee with the tongue that ne'er till now
Betray'd her secret, to receive't for thine!
Believe him not, he sports with thee!—Thy heart
Is not more surely seated in thy breast,

Than is thy image lodged in Ina's heart—
 Not more the spring of life to thee, than that
 Is life itself to Ina! 'Fore the world
 Will I proclaim me thine, and cleave to thee!
 But plight me faith for faith.

Os. I do, sweet maid!

Edr. [*Drawing his sword.*] My right's a bar, which thou
 must first remove!

Os. Thy right! What right? [*Half drawing his sword.*

Ina. Give me the hand that grasps the sword, and grasp
 My hand, instead! Thou'rt mine! Thy hand—thy arm—
 Thy all are mine! My all I have given for thee!
 Paid down for thee a virgin's heart, that ne'er
 Before in love was barter'd. Give me thy hand!
 Or thou'rt the falsest, most forsworn of men,
 Breaking the vow that scarce hath left thy lips;
 And I'm the poorest, most abused of maids!
 Give me thy hand! Nay, an thou wilt not, thus
 Upon thy arm I'll hang, and be thy shield,
 Taking the blows upon my fearless breast,
 That threaten wound to thine.

Os. [*Taking his hand from his sword.*] Thy right? What
 right?

Edr. Dost wish to learn? Such as the bridegroom claims—
 As makes the lover bless his stars, and gives
 Fulfilment of his long-enduring hopes—
 As turns his blissful dreams to substances,
 So rich, past credence, still he thinks he dreams—
 Asks if he wakes—believes it—doubts it—sickens
 Lest day prove night, and truthful morning come,
 And in his very arms his treasures fade!

Os. [*Half drawing his sword again.*] A bridegroom's right!

Ina. That right is thine alone!

O how thy frame with fearful passion shakes!
 While thy full orbs strain on thy countryman,
 With deadly purpose fraught! Turn them on me!
 Read who is Ina's bridegroom in her face!
 See whom her eyes with fondness strain upon,
 As thine on him with hate! O what a fee
 Thou mak'st me pay for that which costs thee nought!
 I call thee lord—If that contents thee not,
 Why then the dearer name of husband take,
 And give me in exchange, an only look!

Os. [*To EDRIC.*] Explain thy words.

Edr. The service I have done
 The Dane, he bids me name requital for;
 And by his God he binds himself, whate'er
 The boon, to grant it. Ina was the boon.

[*OSWITH draws his sword.*

Ina. List to me, Oswith—Oswith—by thy love!—
 My father's oath has made me his! Hear mine!
 By Odin, I'll be bride to none but thee!

Edr. Force will exact what frowardness denies !

Os. And thou couldst wed the bride that loathed thee ?

Edr. Yes.

Os. Put up thy sword. I'd whisper thee. [*They whisper.*

Ina. Say it out.

Thy breath is mine ! More than her own it feeds

Thy Ina's life ! O, 'tis a treacherous breath,

To play the traitor to its mistress thus !

Speak out, I say ! Thou heed'st me not ! False friend !

Friend cruel and unfair, that gives me nought,

Whilst I give all to him !

Edr. 'Tis well.

[*Goes out.*

Ina. 'Tis ill !

Not half so plain thy gleaming brandish'd sword

Could threaten death, as doth thy flashing eye !

Os. Ina, thy fears are causeless. Prithee hence,

Back to the camp ; whilst I revolve the means

Shall bring the course of our now thwarted loves

To prosperous issue.

Ina. I'll revolve them with thee ;

And thou shalt find how thrifty woman's wit,

When set to work by love !

Os. My Ina !—Love !

Bride !—Wife !—for wedded they whom love has join'd—

I'd be alone.

Ina. I will not leave thee ! Come !

We'll go to the camp together.

Os. Sweet ! my way

Lies this way.

Ina. So does mine, then.

Os. Nay, farewell !

Ina. You leave me not ! I'll cling to thee till death

Disjoins us ! Drag me if thou wilt, I'll ne'er

Let go my hold ! Oh was there ever maid

So lost for love ! that knelt—that bent the knee—

Pleaded her cause with her bold tongue—paid tribute,

Large as her eyes could furnish, of her tears

To an unheeding lover, deaf to her,

And scarce confess'd an hour !

Re-enter EDRIC.

Edr. Was it for this

Thou sent'st me hence ? to give thee pause for dalliance !

Traitor !

Os. Ha !

Edr. Coward !

[*Both draw.*

Enter GUTHRUM and ALFRED.

Guth. Hold ! forbear ! Who stirs,

There's not another step 'twixt him and death !

How is this ?—I deem'd you friends !—Your cause of quarrel ?

Ina, my child ! what share hast thou in't ? What !

Dost turn from me ?

[*Angrily.*

Ina. My father!

Guth. There! there! there! [Pressing her to him.]

Did I speak roughly to thee? Silly fawn,
Startled at but a sound! Art thou in tears?
It does concern thee, then?—How?—*Ina*, speak!
Dost hear me? Answer, girl! Well; never heed.
You would if you could! No matter! Noble *Edric*,
Declare the cause of quarrel to thy friend.

Ina. Thou'rt not his friend! Call not thyself his friend!

Guth. My *Ina*, but I must! and so must thou—

Ina. Never!

Guth. What's that!—My child, beware! You know
I brook not thwarting!—must not be gainsaid!
Call him thy friend! Come! Show me thou'rt my child!
My flesh! my blood! that owe themselves to me,
And should be subject to me! Wilt not speak?
Take counsel! Something's rising in my heart
That bodes not good to thee! Once more I say,
Resist me not! Submit! Call him thy friend.
Art silent still? Now, minstrel, prove thou'rt wise!
I found thee so when we discoursed of peace!
Of war!—the duties subjects owe to kings,
And kings to subjects. Now propound the means
Behoves a father take, who would untie
A wilful daughter's tongue!

Alf. Force but subdues

The weak; but, with the strong, 'tis met by force.
Was never found the noble nature yet
That crouch'd before a frown! 'Tis sway'd with smiles.
Chiding her nature thou but chid'st thy own!
She's thy soul's bright and fair reflecting glass!
But look at her! Sits not thy upper lip—
All manly as it is, and bold, to hers—
More proudly firm upon thy nether one,
Than hers upon its fellow! Vauntest thou,
As only late thou didst, rebuke with thee,
Given as rebuke, ne'er mended failing yet?
Then is thy boast her pardon! Give me favour
For speaking thus my thought.

Guth. Thou dost my wish.

I like thy frankness! Yes; I see! You're right!
She's all her father's child! Come to me, *Ina*!

[She rushes into his arms.]

What wouldst thou do for me?

Ina. Aught that I could.

Guth. Ah, there my *Ina* speaks! I like thee thus!
Thus *Ina*, when thou hang'st upon my neck,
And gazest in my face! My *Ina*, list!
I'll tell thee wherefore I would have thee call
The Saxon friend I've sworn to give thee to him.

Ina. Without my heart? What, father, give my hand
Without my heart? Not so wouldst thou give thine,

And make a league of friendship with thy hand
 Thy heart protested 'gainst! And what were that,
 Compared to one of love?—a league of friendship,
 That barr'd a friend out, and enclosed a foe!
 Wouldst thou do that? Thou wouldst not give a smile
 Without thy soul's consent. And wouldst thou have
 Thy Ina give her hand without her heart?

Guth. Dread Odin has my oath!

Ina. So has he mine!

Guth. What hast thou sworn?

Ina. Eternal truth to love!

Guth. Thou dost not know the passion? But thou dost!
 'Tis clear! I see too sure thou art its thrall!

Upon thy cheek his crimson pennon waves!

Thy downcast eyes pay homage to his sway!

Thy heaving breast by its commotion shows

The conqueror is within! I see his power

Confess'd in every fibre of thy frame!

Whom dost thou love? Who has lit up this flame?

Ina. [*Kneeling.*] Thou, father, thou; whose fondness for
 thy child

Would sketch for her the man thou'dst have her wed;

How he should be among his peers in rank—

And that the first—without a peer in worth!

Most brave!—most true!—most generous!—most good!

Fit to be challenger of all the noble field,

In all achievements of supreme renown;

And bear the palm from all! Nor yet to lack

Those qualities of visage, and of form,

Which to these other richer graces join'd,

Make the consummate man! But that I saw

My father such a man, I should have deem'd

A phantom 'twas he drew for me; for ne'er,

Except in him, saw I embodied wealth

Of so rare worth—until I saw it there! [*Pointing to OSWITH.*]

Guth. What's this to me?

Ina. The being of thy child—

Thy Ina!—thy dear Ina!—who forgets

Her father 'tis she's kneeling to, as though

He were a stranger to her; but, now, leaps

Into his bosom! Oh, I'd like to see

The harm could reach me here!

Guth. The Saxon dies!

Ina. No! no!

Guth. He spurn'd the proffer of his life,

When forfeit to the God!

Ina. Nay hear me!

Guth. Spurn'd

My friendship! Guthrum's friendship!

Ina. No!

Guth. He did!

I loved him, though my foe, because I mark'd

His prowess in the fight ! I could have thought
 The God himself had turn'd against his sons,
 And, angry, sided with their enemies !
 He was my captive ! He had bled to Odin !
 I proffer'd him my friendship, would he make
 Alliance with the Dane, to snatch him from
 The altar ; and he spurn'd me ! Ay ! refused
 The hand of a victorious king, through faith
 To an uncrownéd fugitive ! He did !
 I spared him at my child's beseeching ! He
 That spurn'd the parent, now would win the child !
 He dies !

Alf. [*Aside to GUTHRUM.*] Thy Ina dies ! See, how she
 hangs,

Half dead, already on thy shoulder ! Much
 Thou lov'st her ! If none other calls thee father,
 Beware thou art not childless !

Guth. Am I in the wrong ?
 Demand I more than is a father's due ?
 What is her life, but portion of my breath ?

Alf. A portion thou'dst give all thy breath to save !

Guth. Thou sayest right.

Alf. A portion, too, which she
 Would render up, not only to save thine,
 But let thee breathe with ease !

Guth. Thou sayest right ;
 Yet bows she not her fancy to my will.

Alf. She cannot.

Guth. How ?

Alf. You ask ; and you have loved !

Guth. How know you that ?

Alf. Who has not felt the flame ?

Your passion was repaid.

Guth. How know you that ?

Alf. How know I that ? From nought but mutual love
 A flower, consummate rich like that, could grow,
 Where fairest things that harmonize unite !
 E'en such a skin should such a mould incase,
 To such a heart, be casket such a mould ;
 Such lineaments compose the beauteous face,
 Of such a neck that makes its graceful seat !
 And skin, and mould, and heart, and face be served
 By such a minstrel as that tuneful tongue !
 This speaks the mingling of accordant hearts,
 Throbbing in fervent unity ; that one
 No thought, no wish, no hope, no joy can lodge,
 But finds its fellow at the other's core !

Guth. Minstrel, thou'rt right ! Deep does thy wisdom search !
 Her mother, Eva, was my only love,
 As I was hers ! Though daughter of my foe,
 She left her father, friends, land, faith, and all,
 To follow me. She did !—She did !

Alf. And that's
Her child, in whom, the passion that bless'd thee,
Thou'dst turn into a curse!

Guth. I like not that!

Thou makest too bold to say I'd curse my child!

Alf. Look at her!

Guth. Thou art right! Say on! Say on!
Yet where's the profit? Win me Odin's ear,
And move the God to give me back my oath!
Thou but perplexest me! Since thou'rt so wise,
Show me the way not to forswear myself;
And yet not keep my oath!

Alf. Two oaths the God
Has register'd; one only can be kept.
Which he accepts, the God himself decide.
You say he rules the sword; then to the sword
Entrust the cause, and these the terms of strife—
Who masters first his adversary's sword
And yet not sheds his blood, be his the maid!

Os. Content!

Edr. Content!

Ina. Oswith, this chain's of gold,

[Still leaning on her father.]

That never knew alloy—cunningly wrought—
An amulet, that ever faithful guards
The wearer's wishes. Hang it round thy neck,
Thy Ina's fate goes with it! Proves it false,
Drop it into the grave where I shall lie,
Ere, by its treachery, thy rival thrives!

Guth. And Edric, thou receive this ring from me.
The hand that wears it, holds its weapon true,
If faithful to the Dane, as thou to me!

Alf. I have a ring, a charmed bauble too.
Power to the hand it graces, does it give,
O'er falsehood to prevail. 'Tis his who'll take it—
But who would wear it, and its virtue prove,
Must first affirm he owns a loyal heart—
True to the king that first his homage claim'd,
The land that gave him birth—Wilt take it, thou?

[To EDRIC.]

Edr. The ring I'll trust is this I now put on,
The guard of my good sword!

Alf. Wilt take it thou?

[To OSWITH.]

Os. Though to the king I'm true
That first my homage claim'd—true to the land
That gave me birth! yet more, than true to these,
The thrall of love, I dare not take the ring!

Alf. Show me thy hand—my countryman!—'Tis on!
'Tis a true hand—for ne'er would fit the ring
Disloyal finger yet. Look at it well!
Lo! speak I not the truth?

Os. *[Recognising ALFRED.]* My liege!

Alf. Beware!

In whose but a true subject's hands would place
A king his life. Be of good heart! No doubt
Palsy thy arm! The wishes of thy love,
Thy king, are with thee! Heaven be with thee too!

Guth. Away! I'll follow you! and see myself
This bloodless trial made [OSWITH and EDRIC go out.
Here minstrel, take
My child! Support her! Cheer her to abide
The issue of their strife. [Goes out.

Alf. [Supporting INA.] Fair maiden, take
The minstrel's word, thy lover wins the game!
Thy fears are wrongs, where wrong thou least wouldst do!
Doubt on thy champion did another cast,
How would disdain arouse thy languid lip;
Colour thy frozen cheek from snow to flame;
And the expired lustre of thine eye
Re-kindle till it lighten'd! Maiden, list!
The hand's best sinew ever is the heart!
Thy lover's is the sound one! Think of that!
That's right! Look up! Take courage! Oswith throws
His brand away, and grapples Edric's! Ha!
Keep thy hold, Edric, if thou canst! A child's—
An infant's—is it to thy rival's grasp!
Look on thy lover, maiden! His chief's eye
Upon him, double is a vassal's strength;
What then the lover's, in his mistress' eye,
That strives for victory, and she the prize?
He sees thee! Mark you, how his frame distends,
As though with superhuman vigour fraught,
At his good angel's sight? Wave, maiden fair,
Wave your white arm to him! 'Twere ten times worth
A royal pennon in a monarch's hand,
Cheering the champion of his challenged crown!
You see! You see! Now puts he forth his might!
Edric gives way! He faints! His limbs are wax,
Wrestling with limbs of steel! He falls! His sword
Waves o'er his head, in noble Oswith's hand.
Hold up! Nay, gasp not! It were wrong to die,
Slain by thy gallant lover's victory!

Enter GUTHRUM, leading OSWITH.

Guth. There, Saxon, take my child; but thou'rt my thrall.
Thou must not bear her hence!

Alf. He should not!—Guthrum,
Where'er I speak of thee I'll give thee out
Indeed a royal chief! Farewell!

Guth. Not yet.
By Odin, thou shalt join our feast! I say
Thou shalt not go! I like thy company!
I'd hear thy harp again! Come! Follow all. [They go out.

Re-enter EDRIC.

Edr. Foil'd, but not yet o'ercome. The baffled foe
That will not turn a friend, is like to prove
A deadly one! Oswith has won the maid,
But not possess'd her yet! I'll mar his love!
That minstrel is not what he'd seem! Me
He shuns!—communes with Oswith!—Oswith knows him!
Some man of note—a prize to Guthrum—which
If Oswith lets escape, he wrongs the Dane!
Hence, will I work his ruin! To the banquet!
I'll watch their every movement; and unmask him,
Though I should tear the visor from his face! [*Goes out.*]

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*The inside of Guthrum's Tent.*

GUTHRUM, OSWITH, INA, *Chiefs*, ALFRED, EDWY, &c. &c.

Enter EDRIC.

Guth. Come Edric, though not Fortune's friend, thou'rt
mine.

Why didst thou stay behind? Sit by me, Edric.
Look to the minstrel!—See that his goblet's full!—
Let it o'erflow—See to't!

Os. You feast not, love.

Ina. No more do you.

Os. I do not care to feast.

When the heart banquets, viands are pass'd by!

Edith. [*Entering.*] Your little Saxon favourite wants you,
Ina.

He clamours for you, nought can quiet him.

Ina. Nay, try and soothe him. If he baffles thee,
Why bring him hither, then! [*EDITH goes out.*]

Guth. Come, strike your harp!

We'd hear a strain; and prithee let it be
A warlike one. The triumph of the Dane—
Cast thou play that?

Alf. Accurs'd be the bard
That sings his country's shame! Her glory, chief,
I'll sing! My harp hath often rung with it!
Shall ring again! Or if the theme be done,
The strings, which many a year my hands have kiss'd,
I'll tear from their loved frame, though as they snap
My heart-strings break, and I partake the ruin!

Guth. By Odin, but thou'rt bold! I like thee for't.
Play what thou wilt. Well! what's to be the strain?

Alf. The downfall of Cadwallon.

Guth. What was he?

Alf. The Saxons' foe.

ALFRED plays while EDWY sings.

Cry, cry to the eagle, her feast is prepared;
 Cadwallon the Lion his falchion has bared!
 Ten thousand spears dance to his trumpet's song,
 As his march in thunder rolls along!
 Does she hear? Will she come? Is she hurrying down?
 All's ready, and waiting for her alone!
 But the might's with the right,
 From the cloud breaks the light;
 And the head, high at morning—may lie low ere the night!
 But why does the Saxon, Oswald, kneel?
 Is't for his prayers he is dressed in steel?
 And wherefore kneel his Saxon bands?
 Do they pray with their weapons in their hands?
 Or are they contented to banquet the guest
 Cadwallon the Lion has call'd to his feast?
 But the might's with the right,
 From the cloud breaks the light;
 And the head, high at morning—may lie low ere the night!
 Not long did the Saxon kneel—He arose
 With a shout that made leap the bold hearts of his foes;
 And on he rush'd, and down he bore
 The spears that hunted him, before;
 And the trumpet that sounded the first for the field—
 Cadwallon the Lion's—was the first that was still'd!
 For the might's with the right,
 From the cloud breaks the light;
 And the head, high at morning—may lie low ere the night!
 But where is the eagle, was call'd to the feast?
 She is come! but Cadwallon salutes not his guest!
 She has fall'n to her meal without beckon or word!
 She screams with her glee, but her mirth is unheard;
 She has perch'd on the head of the warrior's son,
 And the blood-drop that falls from her beak, is his own.
 For the might's with the right,
 From the cloud breaks the light;
 And the head, high at morning—may lie low ere the night!

Guth. Well done! A strain that for a warrior's ear!
 For me, thrice precious is the ruby cup
 Since the enchanting strain has breathed upon it!
 Drink, friends! Come!—Lips to brims; There's magic in
 The cup! The health of him that pours it in—
 "The bard," the king of song, whose praise to sound
 Becomes and not disparages the lips
 Of kings themselves!

Alf. [*Aside.*] A regal nature his!
 There's something in thee, Guthrum, I could claim

Close kindred with; but there's no grasping hands
 For thee and me, save in the deadly strife
 That ends the hope of one of us! I've gain'd
 All needful knowledge. Ward of caution none
 They keep—in our complete discomfiture
 Secure. An easy prey they're sure to fall
 To sudden onset from a band like ours,
 Strong in their cause, and resolute of heart.

Enter ELSWITH, pale, emaciated, and in wretched attire.

Guth. Ha! who art thou?

Els. Who play'd that strain!

Guth. Thou ask'st

As if reply were not a boon, but debt!

Whence gottest thou that air of high command?

Els. From misery!

Guth. She strangely teaches thee;

Making thee stately that makes others bow!

What seek'st thou here?

Els. I heard a strain without;

I'd learn who play'd that strain.

Guth. That harper.

Els. He!

Hope, thou didst right to mock me! I have found thee

Still, a dissembler; yet would trust thee still!

But now farewell, thou thing of specious tongue,

But hollow heart!—smooth face, that's but a mask

To cover what we loathe—great promiser,

Little performer!—coiner of false smiles,

That turn out tears at last. I've done with thee!

[She sits in the centre.]

Otho. Thou sitt'st in Guthrum's presence.

Els. What of that?

I have sat down with Despair—a greater chief

Than Guthrum—one could make him gnash his teeth!

Ay, could he, mighty as your master is!

I've sat down with Despair! Now show me Death!

I'll take my seat by him! I fear him not!

Alf. Contain thyself, my heart!—It is my queen!

Guth. Her mind's distracted!

Alf. No!—It is her heart.

Ina. Perhaps she hungers. Give her food!

[They present food to her.]

Els. Too rich!

Famine partakes not such! She feeds on haws,

Acorns, and roots, and berries! Give me these!

For these we thank the Dane!

Guth. You thank the Dane!

Ha!

Alf. 'Tis a woman in affliction speaks!

Guth. And let her speak! Yet does she mar the cheer.
 Remove her!

Els. Touch me not! Stand off! My name
Is Woe! I am the child of Wrath! Behold
How she has smitten me, and smitten me,
That mine own eyes don't know me! One hot day,
Parch'd up with thirst and hunger, of a brook
I stoop'd to drink, and saw myself, and scream'd
At presence of a stranger! Time makes things
Unlike the things they were; but Wrath's the changer!

Guth. Persuade her to go hence.

Els. I hear you! Ill

You entertain the guests you force to greet you!

Guth. We force!

Els. Ay!—burn them out of house and home!
Murder their husbands, and their children!—scatter
Their friends, that where a thousand troop to-day
Not one is found to-morrow!—bid them search
For viands in the larders of the wolf
And vulture! which, deriding them, perforce
They come to you!

Guth. Hence with her! force her hence!

Alf. [*Starting up.*] Who hand of force lays on her, let him die!
And save thy manly name from the reproach,
That in thy presence, misery like this
Was offer'd insult with impunity,
And in the sacred person of a woman!

Els. The voice too!—No! it is not, cannot be!

Guth. Heard'st what she said?

Alf. I did.

Guth. Was't true?

Alf. Free speech
Accord'st thou me?

Guth. 'Tis thine!

Alf. The truth she speaks.

But one she seems 'mongst thousands, whom thy sword,
Ravenous of conquest, hath made widows of,
And childless mothers! Who, this hour thou feast'st,
Are famishing!—in their own land, without
Abode or food—and curse the hour when first
Thou trodd'st upon their shores!

Guth. In their own land?

[*He quits his seat and approaches ALFRED.*]

Surely I heard thee not! In their own land?

'Tis mine!—all mine!—their land!—air! water!—they
Themselves!—All mine! Mine! Mine! They! Thou! Ay,
thou!

That mock'st me!—bravest me!—thou, I say, art mine!
My thrall!—my slave!—a worm!—thing for my foot
To tread upon! Confess it!

Alf. No!

Guth. Thou wilt not!

Know'st thou the man thou tempt'st? Dost hear me?
Think'st thou

I speak to thee by my page, to whom thou'rt free
To lend but half an ear?—mayst pass excused
To bear no duty in thine air, thine eye?
Mayst answer by a nod, or not at all? I'm Guthrum!
He whose breath's thy life! A look—
An only look of whose incenséd wrath
Might strike thee dead! Dost thou not tremble?

Alf. No!

Guth. Up, slave, and beg thy life!

Alf. Why beg for that

I deem not worth the only asking for;
Moreover, that thou hast not power to take?

Guth. Not power to take? Was never Guthrum braved
By mortal man before!—Not power to take!—
Guthrum is but a child!—Strong as my wrath,
My stronger wonder overpowers it quite,
And from a tempest quells me to a calm!

The reason? Come, I'll let thee have thy way,
Givest thou me but the reason. Come!—the reason?
Be it but half-sufficient, it shall weigh
Acquittance of thee! Come! the reason—come!

Alf. Your royal word is warrant for my safety.
What by your leave I speak, yourself forbids you
To turn to evil 'gainst me.

Guth. Right, by Odin!
You're always right! and you may speak again,
And freely as before! [*Resumes his seat.*]

Ina. I prithee, Oswith,
Persuade thy countryman to leave the tent.
What now is safety may anon prove danger.
Fierce as 'tis sudden is my father's wrath;
And ever in the hour of social cheer
Most to be fear'd, and look'd for—Speak to him!
Conjure him to go hence. [*OSWITH approaches ALFRED.*]

Os. Had he a steed—

Ina. A steed?—An easy thing, my Oswith! Two—
The fleetest in the camp—shall be at hand,
Ready caparison'd—behind the tent—
That way conduct him hence.

[*Whispers an Attendant, who goes out, while OSWITH approaches ALFRED.*]

Os. My liege, your ear.

Edr. [*To GUTHRUM.*] You mark, my lord, he whispers him.

Guth. I do.

Edr. They understand each other.

Guth. What of that?

Edr. I'll keep my eye upon them.

Guth. Heed them not.

Enter EDITH with ETHELRED.

Els. Whose child is that? not thine!

Edith. He is not mine.

Els. He's not a Danish child !

Edith. He's not.

Els. Is he

A Saxon then ?

Edith. He is a Saxon child.

Els. A Saxon ! Pray you let me see his face !
He's mine !

Edith. He shrinks from thee. He knows thee not.

Els. Me can he know, that do not know myself ?

He'll know my voice ! My child ! My Ethelred !

He knows it not ! and is my voice changed too ?

Or does my face false witness bear so strong,

He gives not credence to his mother's voice !

He is my child ! Believe it for my tears,

My choking utterance, my bended knees,

And my imploring arms that sue to you,

And ask you for my child !

Alf. [*Aside.*] Does Providence
Vouchsafe such mercy !

Guth. If the child is thine,
Thou'lt know where it was found.

Els. Too well I know !

Both when and where. A castle did ye sack,

Whose tenant was the mother of that child.

At night the cry arose, "*The Dane !*" "*The Dane !*"

And then the bursting gate !—the clash of arms !

The shout !—the yell !—the shriek !—the groan !—which rage

And cruelty, and fear, and pain supply,

To make the concert, fell, of savage war !

That mother's care too safe had lodged her child

In the remotest chamber of the whole.

She ask'd for it ; "*The Dane !*" was the reply.

She would have sought it ; but they held her back,

And cried, "*The Dane !*" She shriek'd to be set free ;

Now threaten'd !—now implored !—but all in vain !.

"*The Dane !*" was all the answer she could get !

They forced her thence in cruel duty ! Ay !—

In duty forced the mother from her child ;

While lent the Dane a torch to light her path—

Her flaming towers that blazed about her boy !—

And she went mad !—yet still they bore her on ;

Nor other heed to her distraction gave,

Except to cry, "*The Dane !*" "*The Dane !*" "*The Dane !*"

[*Sinks exhausted upon a seat, clasping her forehead.*]

GUTHRUM and EDRIC whisper.

Els. Alas ! they give not credence to my words !

Will no one plead for me ? My countryman,

Essay your art ! Hast not some melting strain—

Such as draw tears whether they will or not ?

As moves. [*Recognising ALFRED.*] I've found him !

Edr. [*Coming forward.*] Whom ? Whom hast thou found ?

Els. [*Recollecting herself.*] My boy !

Edr. [*Aside.*] I thought she meant the minstrel.

Alf. Yes!

She knows me, and I am a husband still!
I am a father and a husband still!
Oh, happiness, thou comest out of time!
Thou choosest ill the place to greet me in!
Thou mockest me to hold thine arms to me!
I dare not rush to their embrace! I'm poor,
With all the wealth thou say'st is mine again!
I dare not touch it! Better were it far,
I had not now been told on't.

Guth. Take the boy!

But first true answer to our question give.
The castle where we found him was the king's!
Clad as no vassal's offspring was the child.
If thou his mother art, thou art the queen!
Art thou so?

Alf. Guthrum, to the test I put
Thy nature! If 'tis worthy of thy state,
Thy prosperous fortune, and thy high renown,
Approve it now! Lo, Guthrum, do I play
The traitor for thy honour! In thy power
Thou hold'st the son and consort of thy foe!
Of Alfred! Use thy fortune as beseems thee!
Swear by thy God, they shall receive from thee
Safeguard of life and honour.

Guth. Ay, by Odin.

Els. Wouldst thou not take a ransom for us?

Guth. Yes!

Els. What ransom wilt thou take?

Guth. Thy husband's crown!

Els. Alas! he will not ransom us with that!

Alf. He should not!

Guth. Why?

Alf. He wears it for his people.

The day he put it on he vow'd himself
Of them the father! To their parent land
It wedded him! His proper consort she!
'Twixt him and them, he knows not wife, or child,
He dares allow to stand!

Guth. Minstrel, thou ravest!

He has not nature, who 'gainst nature's law
Could so deny his heart!

Alf. He may have more!

Guth. What?

Alf. The command of nature. The attribute
Of kings who feel the import of their titles.
Which stops their ears against her piercing cries!
Which shuts their eyes against her thrilling looks!
Which lifts them so 'bove earth, they seem as though
They sat in some attendant brighter sphere,
Wherefrom they look'd and ruled her!

Guth. Well thou said'st
 Thy world was of the air! Thou dost not speak
 Of things of earth! Thy sayings are not sooth!
 I would thy king were here to prove thee but
 A dreamer! With those jewels in his eye,
 He would not see his crown! Yea, though it shone
 Bright as it did before I thinn'd its studs!
 Couldst find thy king?

Alf. I could.

Guth. Go seek him, then.

And when thou find'st him, greet him from me thus—
*"Thy queen and son are now in Guthrum's power,
 Pay thou but homage to the Dane, they're free."*

Alf. I take my leave.

Els. Guthrum. A boon!

Guth. What is't?

Els. I'd send a message to my lord!

Guth. Thou shalt.

Stand all apart, that freely they confer.

Els. And dost thou go; and wilt thou leave us here?

Alf. I must. Alas! thou know'st not what thou say'st!

Els. Thou'lt leave us here! Dost thou not love our child?

Alf. Beyond my life!

Els. And me?

Alf. Beyond our child!

Els. And must thou leave me? 'Oh! I have search'd for thee

Many, and many a day! Now fear'd thee, dead!
 Now hoped thee, living! Search'd for thee alone!
 One falling now; and now another off;
 With my strong love unequal to keep pace.
 Sleeping in woods and caves! On foot, by dawn;
 Ne'er giving o'er till night again! Now food,
 Now nothing! Scantily I fared to-day;
 Yet 'twas not hunger brought me here, but thou,
 In desperate hope to find thee! Art thou found,
 But to be lost again?

Alf. So were I found,

Went I not instant hence. Look in my eyes,
 And read the husband and the father there,
 In nature's undissembling language vouch'd!
 But, hear the king!

Els. Well!

Alf. Paramount of all,

My public function! Husband—father—friend—
 All titles, and all ties are merged in that!
 Approve thyself the consort of a king!
 I leave thee to return to thee! Return,
 With freedom for thy child—for thee—myself—
 For all—for all must perish, or be free!
 And soon I come! So cheer thy heart with hope!
 Farewell!

Els. [*aloud*]. You'll bear my duty to my lord ?

Alf. I will.

Els. Your hand that you will keep your word !

Alf. There, lady.

Els. Be thy hand my missive ! Thus—

Thus with my tears I write my errand on't—

And with my lips—a faithful signet—seal it !

O, countryman ! perhaps nor he nor thou

Shalt ever see me more ! I feel as one

Amerced of life—that shakes a hand with all—

And asks a blessing from the meanest tongue !

Thy blessing, minstrel, ere thy mistress dies !

Alf. What love would ask to light on head beloved—

What faith and virtue Heaven's own warrant have

To ask of Heaven—light on thy honour'd head !

Edr. I'll see him eye to eye, ere he departs.

Alf. Farewell !

Edr. Stay, minstrel. Let me see thy face !

[*EDRIC stops ALFRED forcibly.*]

Os. All's lost ! [*Half drawing his sword.*]

Alf. [*Turning fully and sternly upon EDRIC.*] There, traitor !

[*EDRIC, utterly confounded, staggers back.*]

Os. Fly, my liege !—Away !

[*ALFRED, EDWY, and OSWITCH go out.*]

Guth. What moves thee, Edric ? What's the matter ?

Speak !

Why is thine eyeball fix'd, thy mouth agape ?

What ails thy blood, that it forsakes thy cheek ?

Why shakes thy frame ?

Edr. My liege !

Guth. Out with it !

Edr. The minstrel !

Guth. What of the minstrel ?

Edr. Oswith plays thee false !

No minstrel leaves the camp ; but Oswith thence,

Treacherous to thee, conducts thine enemy,

Alfred, the Saxon king !

Guth. Ha, follow them !

Stop his retreat ! Away ! Alive or dead,

Have them before us ! [*EDRIC, OTHO, and others go out.*]

Els. Mercy ! Guthrum ! Mercy ! [*Clashing of swords.*]

Guth. Remove her !

Els. Where's the lightning !—What ! no bolt

To blast the impious hand that threatens death

To his anointed head. O mercy ! mercy !

[*She is forced off, EDITH following with the child.*]

Edr. [*without*]. Traitor, give way.

Os. [*without*]. Make way—for none I'll give.

[*The fighting continues.*]

Guth. Who aids him ? Is there treason in the camp,

That thus the contest lasts ? Give me my sword.

Ina. [*Kneeling to GUTHRUM.*] My father !

Guth. [*Not heeding her.*] Ho! my buckler and my spear!
With mine own hand will I transfix him!

Ina. Father!

Enter EDRIC, wounded.

Edr. At last, my lord, we've overpower'd him.

Guth. Whom?

Edr. Oswith.

Guth. And Alfred?

Edr. Alfred has escaped!

Guth. Lay Oswith in chains.

Ina. My father!

Guth. To the God

I give him!—Odin, take him!—He is thine!

By thy victorious spear he bleeds to thee. [*EDRIC goes out.*]

Give him my child!—the traitor! Give him my blood!

I'd pour it out upon the altar first!

I would, with mine own hand! I'd look on her!

And do it! Look on her! Up, girl, and hence!

Ha! Do I see a statue or my child?

That cheek is marble by its hue!—Those eyes—

The chisel makes as good, for any touch

Of sense that's in them! What is it I've done?

Oh! they have loved and pined, and loved again

As fresh as ever! Take her to her couch!

She'll sleep—will she sleep? There, gently! I am grown

From fire to ice with looking on her. Ha!

For what have I done this?—Why stand you here?

What! have I paid so dearly for the prize,

And do you let it go? Pursue! Pursue! [*They go out.*]

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Ina's Tent.*

A Recess in the centre, with a curtain drawn before it.

Enter GUTHRUM, EDITH, and OSCAR.

Guth. What say the priests?

Osc. You may not spare his life!

Your oath to Odin must be kept, unless

His country he forswears, and serves the God—

Conditions which he spurns. Would, else, the tide

Of your great nation's prosperous fortune ebb

To an eternal drought! Among the ranks

They run, thy oath reiterating, and, with words

Ambiguous, starting fears, you may retract,

And curse your people!

Guth. Let their altar reek !
Blood rain upon them till it drown them ! Leave
The tent !

Osc. Shall they prepare to sacrifice ?

Guth. Tell them, if for command of mine they wait,
I will not give it !—No ! not for their god !
She speaks not ?

[*OSCAR goes out.*]

Edith. Nay, my lord, at times a word ;
But none that leads to certain inference.

Guth. Has she not slept ?

Edith. Nought but unnatural sleep—
Rest that might pass for wakefulness—that scarce
Doth shut the lid—which weariness itself
Beholding, ere 'twould taste, would watch ; it seems
So far from sweet ! All listlessness without,
While all within's astir !

Guth. I will not see her.

Edith. My lord ?

Guth. I did not speak ; or if I did,
'Twas not to thee ! I thought myself a father !
I thought as never father loved his child
I loved my Ina ! 'Twas my pride to show it ;
Yea, even when she ruled me like a child !
I used to think that of my fiercest mood
She was the mistress, from my wildest flight
Could call me down, but lit my eye upon her,
As the loved lure the falcon !—and I've kill'd her !
I'm not a father !—No, I never loved her
But as a child, a toy ! Come, show her to me !
Undraw the curtain ! He that makes a corse
Of what he loves, may sure be flint enough
To look upon't.

[*EDITH undraws the curtain, and INA is discovered sitting in a state of fixed abstraction. EDITH raises her, and leads her forward to a couch, INA moving as if it were mechanically.*]

Leave us to ourselves.

[*EDITH goes out.*]

Why, 'tis enough to make the sickly heart
Break out in laughter, when the very work
Our eyes could weep them tearless at, our hands
May boast the making of !

[*Approaches, and sits down beside her.*]

My Ina ! Ina !—

My child ! you'll speak to me ?—What, are you ill ?
How feel you ?—You look well !—There, my own girl,
Lie in your father's bosom !—Speak to him !
What say'st thou, Sweet ?—Wast not about to speak ?
Thou wast. Go on, go on !—Speak to me—Ina ;
Or I'll go mad !—Dost hear ?—On my knees,
I pray you speak to me !—Now, this is wilful !
Away !—You but dissemble !—'Tis put on !—
For shame, for shame ! You've seen my eyes in tears !

You've seen my knees upon the ground!—You know
 It is your father—your old father, and
 You'll not speak to him!—Think you he can't see?
 Why, any one could do't! To fix the eye
 And keep the visage motionless, and sit
 As you were riveted to your seat! A child
 Were scant of wit that lack'd such obvious power—
 Of simulation! I renounce you, Ina!— *[Going.*
 Will you not speak to me, my child? Speak to me! *[Returns.*
 A word—a whisper—anything!—a sign—
 To show me that you are not worse than dead—
 Alive, and just the same! I can be rash!
 I can give way to fury!—I will try
 If life be in thy heart! *[Draws his dagger, and rushes up to her.*
 I'd scare a stone!

[Wild discordant music is heard without. INA starts up and clasps her hands.

Guth. Ha!

Ina. There it is!

Guth. She speaks!—She is alive!

Ina. I've listen'd for't

So long, I fear'd 'twould never come!

Guth. What, Ina?

[Music again.

Ina. Again!

Guth. Do they prepare to lead him forth;

The sacrifice will presently begin!

They make a pretext of their god to mock

My power!

Ina. He's ready!—Let me go to him!

Guth. To whom? Thy lover?

Ina. I should like to get

My father's blessing first!

Guth. Thou hast it, Ina!

Ina. I know I have. Who says he does not love me?

I'd not believe it, though he were to kill me!

He'd do't in madness, and he'd kill himself

When he had found he had done it! Bless his Ina?

He always blesses me!—at morning when

He sees me first, and then, again, at night!

Yea, ofttimes through the day! He'd bless me, though

I broke his heart; and I'll bless him, although

He has broken mine!

Guth. She knows me not!

Ina. We'll wed

As never lovers did. We'll have our nuptials

Of a new fashion. Who'd be bid to them,

Let him bring tears with him, he's welcome—such

As gush with sobs! We'll have no smiles at them!

The meanest churl gets handfuls when he weds!

Nor songs! such minstrelsy a beggar buys

For thanks! No, give us shrieks! and laughter! but

Such laughter as it withers joy to hear!—

As breaketh from the heart of madness!—as
Resounds from lips that wish their owners dead!

Guth. What mean those words, my child?

Ina. I'll wed him as
Ne'er wedded maid, to let him never from
My side; but dwell in such entrancement with him,
The day for us may go without his sun,
And night without her cloud! all converse cease,
Of tongue or eye; that not ourselves shall break
The silence sweet of our deep ecstasy.

Guth. Perception's all within; without is none.
Passion hath drunk up sense! I feel a touch
Of her condition while I look upon her—
Go mad! You had a daughter yesterday—
Brag of her now! Point to her cheek, and ask
If ever grew such smiles as blossom there!
And bid the ear that listens to her, note
The sweetness that it feasts on! [*Music.*] Hark! thou'rt
call'd!

What! not go through the task thou hast begun
So bravely? Slay thy child, and finish it! [*Rushes out.*]

Ina [*alone*]. They'd thwart a maid in her first love, they
would?

They think it easy, but they'll find it hard!
When first I thought I should become a bride,
Wondering how I would deck me, I ran through
The ranks of fairest flowers to pick me one
To set it in my bosom; and I remember
It was a rose I pitch'd on—There's my rose!

[*Draws a dagger, and returns it to her bosom.*
[*Music.*]

The rites begin,—Let me steal after them,
And watch the time! I'm coming to thee, Oswith!
I'll show thee how a Danish maid can love! [*Goes out.*]

SCENE II.—*Selwood Forest.*

Enter ODDUNE and OSWALD, meeting.

Od. No sign of Alfred?

Osw. None! Our scouts have all
Return'd, dishearten'd with their fruitless search.

Od. Where can he linger, with so fair a welcome
Impatient waiting him, as he would meet
From yonder gallant bands? The spirits now
That bear their crests so high, from his delay
To lead them on to action, will anon
Begin to droop—perchance may quite subside!

Osw. How many do we muster?

Od. By the last
Return, six thousand men.

Osw. The field shows fair !

Od. Fair cause—fair field ! Who'd e'er expect so soon
To see the armour burnish'd up again
They cast aside for good ! A pity 'twere
What shows such thrift should not be turn'd to use,
But, bootless, thrown away ! They will not fight
Unless the king commands them !

Osw. See, my lord,
What movement's that ?

Od. Here's one will tell us.

Edg. [*Entering.*] Be
Prepared, my lord. The soldiers clamour for
The king, and doubts are spreading through the ranks ;
You humour them—he will not come to lead them.
Their chiefs conduct them hither, from your own lips
Assurance to receive, and fair encouragement.

Enter EGBERT, KENRICK, ARTHUR, *Chief, and Soldiers.*

Eg. Now Kenrick, speak ! Say what the soldiers want.

Od. Well, gallant friends ! Is England to be free ?
Shall we change places with our conquerors,
Or still endure the yoke ?

Ken. We want the king !
Let him appear, we cannot meet the foe
Too soon !

Od. As surely shall you see him, as
You long to see the foe !

Ken. But when, my lord ?
'Tis that we'd know ! When was the king the last
Upon the field ? Has he not ever, on
The eve of battle, earlier than his chiefs,
Been out ; with looks of ardour heartening us ?—
Our morning sun, that never clouded rose—
Enduing us with life and vigour new !
At most we muster bare six thousand men
To meet the Danish host ! The king, among us,
Would make our numbers treble ! Show us the king.
The only waving of his plume in battle
Were worth a hundred spears in hands as bold
As ever brandish'd weapon !

Od. What, and if
Indeed he should not come ? Ought you to feel
Your tyrant's feet upon your necks the less ?
Your king is present in his cause ! Be that
Your king ! [*ALFRED enters, still disguised.*
Whoever leads you, meet the Dane !
I speak not, friends, because I'm next in place !
I care not for myself ! Point out my post ;
The van, the rear ; I'll be content to take
My stand beside the man of meanest note
Among you ! Make yon minstrel without helm
Or sword your leader, I will follow him !

So that I fight, I care not in what rank !
 Let him who makes the absence of his king,
 Plea to desert his country and his king,
 Fall off ! So Heaven sustain me in the cause,
 Although our Alfred's presence now would add
 Ten other richer lives to mine ; yet say
 He should not come, this faithful sword I draw,
 I will not sheathe till it has struck a blow
 For liberty !

Eg. I second you, brave Oddune.

Osw. And so do I !

Od. And so will every man,
 Unless there be among the people one
 That does not love his king !

Ken. No, Oddune, no !
 The people live but for their king !

Alf. [*Discovering himself.*] The king
 Lives only for his people ! Oh, my people !
 You are the drops of blood that make your king !
 And do I see you once again in arms !

[*Bursts into tears. The chiefs and general soldiers
 seem affected.*]

O friends ! Why draw you hands across your eyes,
 If mine should be ashamed of what they do ?
 We've met again, my friends ! Who is the foe
 Shall sunder us again ? O England ! England !
 Too fair—too richly gifted—not to tempt
 The spoiler—well that thou hast sons, too true,
 To leave thee to his ravine ! Thou'lt be free
 Till thou art childless ! Think not, gallant friends,
 An hour I've squander'd that was due to you,
 And to our common country ! I have seen
 The Danish camp !

Od. Their camp, my liege !

Alf. Have stood
 In Guthrum's very presence ! That disguise
 Will tell thee how. They'd fall an easy prey
 To half our numbers ! Friends ! a royal stake
 I've laid upon your heads, that you will win
 The day !

Od. What stake, my liege ?

Alf. Your prince and queen !
 They're in the spoiler's power. I might, indeed,
 Have ransom'd them, but what he ask'd, your king could not
 afford to pay.

Od. What was't, my liege ?

Alf. My people, Oddune !

Eg. In the spoiler's power
 Our prince and queen ! What wait we for ?

Od. For nothing,
 But the king's word to move upon the foe !

Alf. Upon him, then ! Now think you on the things

You most do love! Husbands and fathers on
 Their wives and children—lovers upon their mistresses—
 And all upon their country! When you use
 Your weapons, think on the beseeching eyes
 To whet them could have lent you tears for water.
 Oh, now be men or never! From your hearths
 Thrust the unbidden feet, that from their nooks
 Your aged fathers drove—your wives and babes!
 The couches your fair-handed daughters used
 To spread, let not the vaunting stranger press,
 Weary from spoiling you! Your roofs that hear
 The wanton riot of the intruding guest
 That mocks their masters—clear them for the sake
 Of the manhood, to which all that's precious clings,
 Else perishes. The land that bore you—oh!
 Do honour to her! Let her glory in
 Your breeding!—Rescue her—Revenge her, or
 Ne'er call her mother more! Come on, my friends!
 And where you take your stand upon the field,
 Thence, howsoever you advance, resolve
 A foot you'll ne'er recede; while from the tongues
 Of womanhood and childhood, helplessness
 Invokes you to be strong! Come on! Come on!
 I'll bring you to the foe! And when you meet him,
 Strike hard! Strike home! Strike while a blow
 Is in an arm! Strike till you're free, or fall! [*They go out.*]

SCENE III.—*A Wood.*

The statue of Odin in the centre; before it an altar prepared for sacrifice. Enter procession of sacrifice, in the following order:—Danish Chief, with a body of Danish Soldiers; a body of Danish Chiefs, and AMUND, EDRIC, and GUTHRUM; a body of Danish Priests; Assistants with torches; Boys carrying censers; one Boy with a cushion, on which the knife of sacrifice is laid; Chief Priest of Odin; OSWITH; a body of Danish Soldiers. The procession marches to the following chorus:—

Prepare the faggot—light the brand—
 The victim's ready for the God!
 The knife is bare in the sacred hand,
 That on the altar pours the blood!
 Prepare!—Prepare!—Prepare!—
 Great Odin's rites
 The mortal who slights,

His roof shall blaze in peace—his spear shall break in war!

Guth. Saxon! Thou hast of life a moment yet
 At thy command—Use it for life!—for love!—
 For liberty! But say the word, at once

The weapon, ready for thy blood, is sheath'd,
Unstain'd and harmless!

Os. I'm prepared to die!

Priest. Saxon!

Os. I come!

Priest. Come! Bare his breast! Odin, receive thy victim!

Ina. [*Rushing in.*] Oswith, I wed thee thus!

[*She is on the point of plunging the dagger into her heart; OSWITH bursts from the Priest and arrests her arm.*]

Os. Hold, Ina, hold!

Thou shalt not die with Oswith!

Guth. Oswith, live!

Although the God himself demanded him,

He shall not die who saves my Ina's life!

Priest. The servants of the God protect his rights!

Danish Soldiers. [*Rushing in.*] The Saxon's in the camp,
and down upon us!

Alf. [*without.*] Press on—press on—the first that comes to
blows

Is the king's squire! Press on!

[*The Danes front the stage on which the Saxons are coming, who enter, headed by ALFRED. Danes are driven off; ALFRED and GUTHRUM engage; GUTHRUM is disarmed.*]

Alf. Guthrum, live

The friend of Alfred! Serve the God he serves!

To wear a crown, thou need'st not fight for one,

Except to keep it! Fair Northumbria

Receives thee for her king—My queen and son!

[*ODDUNE leads on ELSWITH and ETHELRED.*]

Enter EGBERT and EDRIC, guarded.

Alf. Who's he?

Eg. A traitor to our cause, my lord—

Whose sword has made more havoc 'mongst our people,

Than any ten of your foes! His hand, accurst,

It was that fired the hold where slept your queen

And son.

Ken. and others. Despatch him!

Alf. Hold! This victory

I will perpetuate by such an act

As shall from future kings remove the power

To make their public functions pander to

Their private gust! Select twelve men, his peers,

And swearing them upon the book of God,

As they shall answer at the judgment-day,

To try their prisoner fairly, let the charge

Be brought before them; and as they decide,

Be finally his innocence or guilt

Establish'd. Hence! Hereby shall private right,

Which, guarded, fortifieth, more than arms,

The conservator of the public weal,
Be sacred even from the sceptre's touch !
Thus to a people faithful to their king,
A faithful king an institution gives
That makes the lowly cottage lofty as
The regal dome—holds justice paramount
Of all—before her throne the peasant and
The king himself on equal footing brings !—
A gift which you'll preserve for ever whole !
From which, as from your blood, pollution keep !
Which, if you're ask'd to render back, by all
You owe yourselves, your country, and the throne,
You'll answer, no ! Which, when you'd name, you'll call
Trial by Jury !

Guth. Great the victory
That kings gain o'er themselves. Blest are the heads
That bow to sway like thine !

Alf. My countrymen !
Sons of the sea—henceforth her restless plain
Shall be your battle-field ! There shall you meet
The threat'ning storm of war ! There shall it burst,
Its rage unfelt at home—its din unheard !
You've fought like England's true-born sons, to-day !
You've taught a lesson to her sons to come !
By your example fired, should e'er a foe
In after-times invade her envied shores,
Her sons, of all descriptions and degrees,
To succour her, shall grapple soul and hand ;
Rampart her throne with living walls of hearts,
And teach the fell invader that the sea
Embraced her, never to betray her glory !

END OF ALFRED THE GREAT.

THE HUNCHBACK:

A Play.

TO MAJOR FRANCIS CAMPBELL

(LATE OF THE 8TH, OR KING'S OWN).

MY DEAR SIR,

As an enthusiastic admirer of the Drama, and as a gentleman from whom, solely on account of my connection with it, I have received the most flattering attention, you are entitled to the Dedication of this Play, and it is accordingly inscribed to you,

By your grateful Servant,

JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES.

1832.

Wilf. A world! Three things have I an especial passion for. The finest hound, the finest horse, and the finest wife in the kingdom, Master Gaylove!

Gay. The finest wife?

Wilf. Yes, sir; I marry. Once the earldom comes into my line, I shall take measures to perpetuate its remaining there. I marry, sir! I do not say that I shall love. My heart has changed mistresses too often to settle down in one servitude now, sir. But fill, I pray you, friends. This, if I mistake not, is the day whence I shall date my new fortunes; and, for that reason, hither have I invited you; that, having been so long my boon companions, you shall be the first to congratulate me.

Enter Waiter.

Waiter. You are wanted, Master Wilford.

Wilf. By whom?

Waiter. One Master Walter.

Wilf. His lordship's agent! News, sirs! Show him in! [*Waiter goes out.*]

My heart's a prophet, sirs.—The Earl is dead.

Enter MASTER WALTER.

Well, Master Walter. How accost you me?

Wal. As your impatience shows me you would have me.—My lord, the Earl of Rochdale!

Gay. Give you joy!

Hold. All happiness, my lord!

Simp. Long life and health unto your lordship!

Gay. Come!

We'll drink to his lordship's health! 'Tis two o'clock,

We'll e'en carouse till midnight! Health, my lord!

Hold. My lord, much joy to you!

Simp. All good to your lordship!

Wal. Give something to the dead!

Gay. Give what?

Wal. Respect!

He has made the living! First to him that's gone,

Say "Peace!"—and then with decency to revels!

Gay. What means the knave by revels?

Wal. Knave?

Gay. Ay, knave!

Wal. Go to! Thou'rt flush'd with wine!

Gay. Thou sayest false!

Though didst thou need a proof thou speakest true,

I'd give thee one. Thou seest but one lord here,

And I see two!

Wal. Reflect'st thou on my shape?

Thou art a villain!

Gay. [*Starting up.*] Ha!

Wal. A coward, too!

Draw!

[*Drawing his sword,*

Gay. Only mark him ! how he struts about !
How laughs his straight sword at his noble back.

Wal. Does it ? It cuffs thee for a liar then !

[*Strikes GAYLOVE with his sword.*]

Gay. A blow !

Wal. Another, lest you doubt the first !

Gay. His blood on his own head ! I'm for you, sir ! [*Draws.*]

Clif. Hold, sir ! This quarrel's mine !

[*Coming forward and drawing.*]

Wal. No man shall fight for me, sir !

Clif. By your leave,
Your patience, pray ! My lord, for so I learn
Behoves me to accost you—for your own sake,
Draw off your friend !

Wal. Not till we have a bout, sir !

Clif. My lord, your happy fortune ill you greet !—
Ill greet it those who love you—greeting thus
The herald of it !

Wal. Sir, what's that to you ?
Let go my sleeve !

Clif. My lord, if blood be shed
On the fair dawn of your prosperity,
Look not to see the brightness of its day.
'Twill be o'ercast throughout !

Gay. My lord, I'm struck !

Clif. You gave the first blow, and the hardest one !
Look, sir ; if swords you needs must measure, I'm
Your mate, not he !

Wal. I'm mate for any man !

Clif. Draw off your friend, my lord, for your own sake !

Wilf. Come, Gaylove ! let's have another room.

Gay. With all my heart, since 'tis your lordship's will.

Wilf. That's right ! Put up ! Come, friends !

[*WILFORD and Friends go out.*]

Wal. I'll follow him !
Why do you hold me ? 'Tis not courteous of you !
Think'st thou I fear them ? Fear ! I rate them but
As dust ! dross ! offals ! Let me at them !—Nay,
Call you this kind ? then kindness know I not ;
Nor do I thank you for't ! Let go, I say !

Clif. Nay, Master Walter, they're not worth your wrath !

Wal. How know you me for Master Walter ? By
My hunchback, eh !—my stilts of legs and arms,
The fashion more of ape's than man's ? Aha !
So you have heard them, too—their savage gibes
As I pass on,—“There goes my lord !” Aha !
God made me, sir, as well as them and you !
'Sdeath ! I demand of you, unhand me, sir !
Clif. There, sir, you're free to follow them ! Go forth,
And I'll go too : so on your wilfulness
Shall fall whate'er of evil may ensue.
Is't fit, you waste your choler on a burr ?

The nothings of the town ; whose sport it is
To break their villain jests on worthy men,
The worthier the fitter ! Fie for shame !
Regard what such would say ? So would not I,
No more than heed a cur.

Wal. You're right, sir ; right.
For twenty crowns !—so there's my rapier up !
You've done me a good turn against my will ;
Which, like a wayward child, whose pet is off,
That made him restive under wholesome check,
I now right humbly own, and thank you for.

Clif. No thanks, good Master Walter, owe you me !
I'm glad to know you, sir.

Wal. I pray you, now,
How did you learn my name ? Guess'd I not right ?
Was't not my comely hunch that taught it you ?

Clif. I own it.
Wal. Right, I know it ; you tell truth.
I like you for't.

Clif. But when I heard it said
That Master Walter was a worthy man,
Whose word would pass on 'change soon as his bond ;
A liberal man—for schemes of public good
That sets down tens, where others units write ;
A charitable man—the good he does,
That's told of, not the half—I never more
Could see the hunch on Master Walter's back !

Wal. You would not flatter a poor citizen ?

Clif. Indeed, I flatter not !

Wal. I like your face—
A frank and honest one ! Your frame's well knit,
Proportion'd, shaped !

Clif. Good sir !

Wal. Your name is Clifford ?—
Sir Thomas Clifford. Humph ! You're not the heir
Direct to the fair baronetcy ? He

That was, was drown'd, abroad. Am I not right ?
Your cousin, was't not ?—so succeeded you
To rank and wealth, your birth ne'er promised you.

Clif. I see you know my history.

Wal. I do.
You're lucky who conjoin the benefits
Of penury and abundance ; for I know
Your father was a man of slender means.
You do not blush, I see. That's right ! Why should you ?
What merit to be dropp'd on fortune's hill ?
The honour is to climb it. You'd have done it ;
For you were train'd to knowledge, industry,
Frugality, and honesty,—the sinews
That surest help a man to gain the top,
And then will keep him there. I have a clerk,

Once served your father; there's the riddle for you.
Humph! I may thank you for my life to-day.

Clif. I pray you say not so.

Wal. But I will say so!

Because I think so, know so, feel so, sir!
Your fortune, I have heard, I think, is ample!
And doubtless you live up to't?

Clif. 'Twas my rule,
And is so still, to keep my outlay, sir,
A span within my means.

Wal. A prudent rule!
The turf is a seductive pastime?

Clif. Yes.

Wal. You keep a racing stud? You bet?

Clif. No, neither.

'Twas still my father's precept—"Better owe
A yard of land to labour, than to chance
Be debtor for a rood!"

Wal. 'Twas a wise precept.
You've a fair house—you'll get a mistress for it?

Clif. In time!

Wal. In time? 'Tis time thy choice were made!
Is't not so yet? Or is thy lady love
The newest still thou seest?

Clif. Nay, not so.
I'd marry, Master Walter, but old use—
For since the age of thirteen, I have lived
In the world—has made me jealous of the thing
That flatter'd me with hope of profit. Bargains
Another would snap up, might lie, for me;
Till I had turn'd and turn'd them! Speculations,
That promised twenty, thirty, forty, fifty,
Ay, cent-per-cent. returns, I would not launch in,
When others were afloat, and out at sea;
Whereby I made small gains, but miss'd great losses.
As ever, then, I look'd before I leap'd,
So do I now.

Wal. Thou'rt all the better for it!
[*Aside.*] Let's see! Hand free—heart whole—well-favour'd
—so!

Rich—titled—let that pass!—kind, valiant, prudent—
Sir Thomas, I can help thee to a wife,
Hast thou the luck to win her!

Clif. Master Walter!
You jest?

Wal. I do not jest!—I like you!—Mark!—
I like you—and I like not every one!
I say a wife, sir, can I help you to,
The pearly texture of whose dainty skin
Alone were worth thy baronetcy! Form
And feature has she, wherein move and glow

The charms, that in the marble, cold and still,
 Cull'd by the sculptor's jealous skill and join'd there,
 Inspire us! Sir, a maid, beneath whose feet,
 A duke—a duke might lay his coronet,
 To lift her to his state, and partner her!
 A fresh heart too!—a young fresh heart, sir; one
 That Cupid has not toy'd with; and a warm one—
 Fresh, young, and warm!—Mark that! A mind to boot—
 Wit, sir; sense, taste;—a garden strictly tended—
 Where nought but what is costly flourishes!
 A consort for a king, sir! You shall see her!

Clif. I thank you, Master Walter! As you speak,
 Methinks I see me at the altar-foot!

Her hand fast lock'd in mine!—the ring put on!
 My wedding-bell rings merry in my ear;
 And round me throng glad tongues that give me joy
 To be the bridegroom of so fair a bride!

Wal. What! sparks so thick? We'll have a blaze anon!

Servant. [*Entering.*] The chariot's at the door.

Wal. It waits in time!

Sir Thomas, it shall bear thee to the bower
 Where dwells this fair—for she's no city belle,
 But e'en a sylvan goddess!

Clif. Have with you!

Wal. You'll bless the day you served the Hunchback, sir!
 [*They go out.*]

SCENE II.—*A Garden before a Country House.*

Enter JULIA and HELEN.

Helen. I like not, Julia, this your country life.
 I'm weary on't!

Julia. Indeed? So am not I!
 I know no other; would no other know!

Helen. You would no other know! Would you not know
 Another relative?—another friend—

Another house—another anything,
 Because the ones you have already please you?
 That's poor content! Would you not be more rich,
 More wise, more fair? The song that last you learn'd
 You fancy well; and therefore shall you learn
 No other song? Your virginal, 'tis true,
 Hath a sweet tone; but does it follow thence,
 You shall not have another virginal?
 You may, love, and a sweeter one; and so
 A sweeter life may find, than this you lead!

Julia. I seek it not. Helen, I'm constancy!

Helen. So is a cat, a dog, a silly hen,
 An owl, a bat,—where they are wont to lodge,
 That still sojourn, nor care to shift their quarters.
 Thou'rt constancy? I am glad I know thy name!

The spider comes of the same family,
That in his meshy fortress spends his life,
Unless you pull it down and scare him from it.
And so thou'rt constancy? Art proud of that?
I'll warrant thee I'll match thee with a snail
From year to year that never leaves his house!
Such constancy forsooth!—A constant grub
That houses ever in the self-same nut
Where he was born, till hunger drives him out,
Or plunder breaketh through his castle wall!
And so, in very deed, thou'rt constancy!

Julia. Helen, you know the adage of the tree;—
I've ta'en the bend. This rural life of mine,
Enjoin'd me by an unknown father's will,
I've led from infancy. Debarr'd from hope
Of change, I ne'er have sigh'd for change. The town
To me was like the moon, for any thought
I e'er should visit it—nor was I taught
To think it half so fair!

Helen. Not half so fair!
The town's the sun, and thou hast dwelt in night
E'er since thy birth, not to have seen the town!
Our women there are queens, and kings our men;
Their houses palaces!

Julia. And what of that?
Have your town-palaces a hall like this?
Couches so fragrant? walls so high-adorn'd?
Casements with such festoons, such prospects, Helen,
As these fair vistas have? Your kings and queens!
See me a May-day queen, and talk of them!

Helen. Extremes are ever neighbours. 'Tis a step
From one to the other! Were thy constancy
A reasonable thing—a little less
Of constancy—a woman's constancy—
I should not wonder wert thou ten years hence
The maid I know thee now; but, as it is,
The odds are ten to one, that this day year
Will see our May-day queen a city one!

Julia. Never! I'm wedded to a country life!
O, did you hear what Master Walter says!
Nine times in ten, the town's a hollow thing,
Where what things are is nought to what they seem;
Where merit's name laughs merit's self to scorn!
Where friendship and esteem, that ought to be
The tenants of men's hearts, lodge in their looks
And tongues alone. Where little virtue, with
A costly keeper, passes for a heap;
A heap, for none, that has a homely one!
Where fashion makes the law—your umpire which
You bow to, whether it has brains or not!
Where Folly taketh off his cap and bells,
To clap on Wisdom, which must bear the jest!

Where to pass current you must seem the thing,
The passive thing, that others think; and not
Your simple, honest, independent self!

Helen. Ay: so says Master Walter. See I not
What can you find in Master Walter, Julia,
To be so fond of him!

Julia. He's fond of me!
I've known him since I was a child. E'en then,
The week I thought a weary-heavy one,
That brought not Master Walter. I had those
About me, then, that made a fool of me,
As children oft are fool'd; but more I loved
Good Master Walter's lesson, than the play
With which they'd surfeit me. As I grew up,
More frequent Master Walter came, and more
I loved to see him! I had tutors then,
Men of great skill and learning—but not one
That taught like Master Walter. What they'd show me,
And I, dull as I was, but doubtful saw,—
A word from Master Walter made as clear
As daylight! When my schooling days were o'er—
That's now good three years past—three years—I vow
I'm twenty, Helen!—well, as I was saying,
When I had done with school, and all were gone,
Still Master Walter came!—And still he comes,
Summer or winter!—frost or rain! I've known
The snow upon a level with the hedge,
Yet there was Master Walter!

Helen. Who comes here?
A carriage, and a gay one—Who alights?
Pshaw! Only Master Walter! What see you,
Which thus repairs the arch of the fair brow,
A frown was like to spoil?—A gentleman!
One of our town kings! Mark!—How say you now?
Wouldst be a town queen, Julia?—Which of us,
I wonder, comes he for?

Julia. For neither of us!
He's Master Walter's clerk, most like.

Helen. Most like!
Mark him as he comes up the avenue;
So looks a clerk! A clerk has such a gait!
So does a clerk dress, Julia!—Mind his hose—
They're very like a clerk's! a diamond loop
And button, note you, for his clerkship's hat!
O, certainly a clerk! A velvet cloak,
Jerkin of silk, and doublet of the same!—
For all the world a clerk! See, Julia, see,
How master Walter bows, and yields him place,
That he may first go in,—A very clerk!
I'll learn of thee, love, how to know a clerk!

Julia. I wonder who he is!

Helen. Wouldst like to know?

Wouldst for a fancy, ride to town with him?
I prophesy he comes to take thee thither!

Julia. He ne'er takes me to town! No, Helen, no!
To town who will, a country life for me!

Helen. We'll see!

Enter FATHOM.

Fath. You're wanted, madam,

Julia [embarrassed]. Which of us?

Fath. You, madam.

Helen. Julia! what's the matter? Nay,
Mount not the rose so soon! He must not see it
A month hence! 'Tis love's flower, which once she wears,
The maid is all his own!

Julia. Go to!

Helen. Be sure

He comes to woo thee! He will bear thee hence!
He'll make thee change the country for the town!

Julia. I'm constancy. Name he the town to me,
I'll tell him what I think on't!

Helen. Then you guess
He comes a wooing?

Julia. I guess nought!

Helen. You do!

At your grave words, your lips, more honest, smile,
And show them to be traitors. Hie to him!

Julia. Hie thee to soberness.

[Goes out.]

Helen. Ay, will I, when,
Thy bridemaid, I shall hie to church with thee.
Well, Fathom, who is come?

Fath. I know not.

Helen. What!
Didst thou not hear his name?

Fath. I did.

Helen. What is't?

Fath. I noted not.

Helen. What hast thou ears for, then?

Fath. What good were it for me to mind his name?
I do but what I must do. To do that
Is labour quite enough!

Wal. [without]. What, Fathom!

Fath. Here.

Wal. [Entering.] Here, sirrah! Wherefore didst not come
to me?

Fath. You did not bid me come.

Wal. I call'd thee.

Fath. Yes,
And I said "Here," and waited then to know
Your worship's will with me.

Wal. We go to town.

Thy mistress, thou, and all the house.

Fath. Well, sir?

Wal. Mak'st thou not ready then to go to town?

Fath. You did not bid me to make ready, sir.

Wal. Hence, knave, despatch! [*FATHOM goes out.*]

Helen. Go we to town?

Wal. We do;

'Tis now her father's will, she sees the town.

Helen. I'm glad, on't! Goes she to her father?

Wal. No.

At the desire of thine, she, for a term,
Shares roof with thee.

Helen. I'm very glad on't.

Wal. What!

You like her then? I thought you would. 'Tis time
She sees the town.

Helen. It has been time for that
These six years!

Wal. By thy wisdom's count. No doubt
You've told her what a precious place it is?

Helen. I have.

Wal. I even guess'd as much. For that
I told thee of her; brought thee here to see her;
And pray'd thee to sojourn a space with her;
That its fair space, from thy too fair report,
Might strike a novice less,—so less deceive her.
I did not put thee under check.

Helen. 'Twas right,—

Else had I broken loose, and run the wilder!
So knows she not her father yet? That's strange.
I prithee how does mine?

Wal. Well—very well.
News for thee.

Helen. What?

Wal. Thy cousin is in town.

Helen. My cousin Modus?

Wal. Much do I suspect

That cousin's nearer to thy heart than blood.

Helen. Pshaw! Wed me to a musty library!
Love him who nothing loves but Greek and Latin!
But, Master Walter, you forget the main
Surpassing point of all! Who's come with you?

Wal. Ay, that's the question!

Helen. Is he soldier or

Civilian?—lord or gentleman? He's rich,
If that's his chariot! Where is his estate?
What brings it in? Six thousand pounds a year?
Twelve thousand, may be! Is he bachelor,
Or husband?—Bachelor I'm sure he is!
Comes he not hither wooing, Master Walter?
Nay, prithee, answer me!

Wal. Who says thy sex
Are curious? That they're patient, I'll be sworn;
And reasonable—very reasonable—

To look for twenty answers in a breath !
 Come, thou shalt be enlighten'd—but propound
 Thy questions one by one ! Thou'rt far too apt
 A scholar ! My ability to teach
 Will ne'er keep pace, I fear, with thine to learn. [*They go out.*]

[SCENE III.—*An Apartment in the House.*]

Enter JULIA, followed by CLIFFORD.

Julia. No more ! I pray you, sir, no more !

Clif. I love you !

Julia. You mock me, sir !

Clif. Then is there no such thing

On earth as reverence ; honour filial, the fear
 Of kings, the awe of supreme Heaven itself,
 Are only shows and sounds that stand for nothing.
 I love you !

Julia. You have known me scarce a minute !

Clif. Say but a moment, still I say I love you !
 Love's not a flower that grows in the dull earth !—
 Springs by the calendar !—must wait for sun—
 For rain !—matures by parts !—must take its time
 To stem, to leaf, to bud, to blow ! It owns
 A richer soil, and boasts a quicker seed !
 You look for it, and see it not ; and lo !
 E'en while you *look*, the peerless flower is up,
 Consummate in the birth !

Julia. You're from the town ;
 How comes it, sir, you seek a country wife ?

Clif. In joining contrasts lieth love's delight.
 Complexion, stature, nature, mateth it,
 Not with their kinds, but with their opposites.
 Hence hands of snow in palms of russet lie ;
 The form of Hercules affects the sylph's ;
 And breasts, that ease the lion's fear-proof heart,
 Find their meet lodge in arms where tremors dwell !
 Haply for this, on Afric's swarthy neck,
 Hath Europe's priceless pearl been seen to hang,
 That makes the orient poor ! So with degrees,
 Rank passes by the circlet-graced brow,
 Upon the forehead, bare, of notelessness
 To print the nuptial kiss. As with degrees
 So is't with habits ; therefore I, indeed
 A gallant of the town, the town forsake,
 To win a country wife !

Julia. Who marries me
 Must lead a country life.

Clif. The life I'd lead !
 But fools would fly from it ; for O ! 'tis sweet !
 It finds the heart out, be there one to find ;
 And corners in't where store of pleasures lodge,

We never dream'd were there! It is to dwell
 'Mid smiles that are not neighbours to deceit;
 Music, whose melody is of the heart;
 And gifts, that are not made for interest,
 Abundantly bestow'd by nature's cheek,
 And voice, and hand! It is to live on life,
 And husband it! It is to constant scan
 The handiwork of Heaven! It is to con
 Its mercy, bounty, wisdom, power! It is
 To nearer see our God!

Julia. How like he talks
 To Master Walter!—Nay, no country life
 For thee! Thou wouldst not live one half a year!
 A quarter mightst thou for the novelty
 Of fields and trees; but then it needs must be
 In summer time, when they go dress'd.

Clif. Not it!
 In any time—say winter! Fields and trees
 Have charms for me in very winter time!

Julia. But snow may clothe them then.
Clif. I like them full

As well in snow!
Julia. You do?

Clif. I do.
Julia. But night
 Will hide both snow and them, and that sets in
 Ere afternoon's well out. A heavy thing,
 A country fireside in a winter's night,
 To one bred in the town; where winter's said,
 For sun of gaiety and sportiveness,
 To beggar shining summer!

Clif. I should like
 A country winter's night especially!

Julia. You'd sleep by the fire!

Clif. Not I; I'd talk to thee!

Julia. You'd tire of that!

Clif. I'd read to thee!

Julia. And that!

Clif. I'd talk to thee again!

Julia. And sooner tire
 Than first you did, and fall asleep at last!
 You'd never do to lead a country life.

Clif. You deal too harshly with me! Matchless maid,
 As loved instructor brightens dullest wit,
 Fear not to undertake the charge of me!
 A willing pupil kneels to thee, and lays
 His title and his fortune at your feet.

Julia. His title and his fortune!

Enter MASTER WALTER and HELEN.—*JULIA, disconcerted,*
retires with the latter.—*CLIFFORD rises.*

Wal. So, Sir Thomas!

Aha! you husband time! Well, was I right?
 Is't not the jewel that I told you 'twas?
 Wouldst thou not give thine eyes to wear it? Eh?
 It has an owner though.—Nay, start not,—one
 That may be brought to part with't, and with whom
 I'll stand thy friend—I will—I say, I will!
 A strange man, sir, and unaccountable:
 But I can humour him—will humour him
 For thy sake, good Sir Thomas; for I like thee.
 Well, is't a bargain? Come, thy hand upon it.
 A word or two with thee.

[*They retire. JULIA and HELEN come forward.*]

Julia. Go up to town!

Helen. Have I not said it ten times o'er to thee?
 But if thou likest it not, protest against it.

Julia. Not if 'tis Master Walter's will.

Helen. What then?

Thou wouldst not break thy heart for Master Walter?

Julia. That follows not!

Helen. What follows not?

Julia. That I

Should break my heart, because we go to town!

Helen. Indeed?—O that's another matter. Well,
 I'd e'en advise thee then to do his will;
 And, ever after, when I prophesy,
 Believe me, *Julia!*

[*They retire. MASTER WALTER comes forward.*]

Enter FATHOM.

Fath. So please you, sir, a letter,—a post-haste letter! The
 bearer on horseback, the horse in a foam—smoking like a
 boiler at the heat—be sure a post-haste letter!

Wal. Look to the horse and rider. [*Opens the letter, and reads.*]
 What's this? A testament address'd to me,
 Found in his lordship's escrutoire, and thence
 Directed to be taken by no hand
 But mine!—My presence instantly required!

[*SIR THOMAS, JULIA, and HELEN come forward.*]

Come, my mistresses,
 You dine in town to-day. Your father's will
 It is, my *Julia*, that you see the world;
 And thou shalt see it in its best attire.
 Its gayest looks—its richest finery
 It shall put on for thee, that thou mayst judge
 Betwixt it, and this rural life you've lived.
 Business of moment I'm but just advised of,
 Touching the will of my late noble master,
 The Earl of Rochdale, recently deceased,
 Commands me for a time to leave thee there.
 Sir Thomas, hand her to the chariot. Nay,
 I tell thee true. We go indeed to town!

[*They go out.*]

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in Master Heartwell's House.*

Enter FATHOM and THOMAS.

Thos. Well, Fathom, is thy mistress up?

Fath. She is, Master Thomas, and breakfasted.

Thos. She stands it well! 'Twas five, you say, when she came home; and now it wants three quarters of an hour of ten? Wait till her stock of country health is out.

Fath. 'Twill come to that, Master Thomas, before she lives another month in town! Three, four, five, six o'clock are now the hours she keeps. 'Twas otherwise with her in the country. There, my mistress used to rise what time she now lies down.

Thos. Why, yes; she's changed since she came hither.

Fath. Changed, do you say, Master Thomas? Changed, forsooth! I know not the thing in which she is not changed; saying that she is still a woman. I tell thee there is no keeping pace with her moods. In the country she had none of them. When I brought what she asked for, it was "Thank you, Fathom," and no more to do; but now, nothing contents her. Hark ye! Were you a gentleman, Master Thomas,—for then you know you would be a different kind of man,—how many times would you have your coat altered?

Thos. Why, Master Fathom, as many times as it would take to make it fit me.

Fath. Good! But, supposing it fitted thee at the first?

Thos. Then would I not have it altered at all.

Fath. Good! Thou wouldst be a reasonable gentleman. Thou wouldst have a conscience. Now hark to a tale about my lady's last gown. How many times, think you, took I it back to the sempstress?

Thos. Thrice, may be.

Fath. Thrice, may be! Twenty times, may be; and not a turn too many, for the truth on't. Twenty times, on the oath of the sempstress. Now mark me—can you count?

Thos. After a fashion.

Fath. You have much to be thankful for, Master Thomas. You London serving-men know a world of things, which we in the country never dream of. Now mark—Four times took I it back for the flounce; twice for the sleeves; thrice for the tucker—How many times, in all, is that?

Thos. Eight times to a fraction, Master Fathom.

Fath. What a master of figures you are! Eight times—now, recollect that! And then found she fault with the trimmings! Now tell me how many times took I back the gown for the trimmings?

Thos. Eight times more, perhaps!

Fath. Ten times to a certainty. How many times makes that?

Thos. Eighteen, Master Fathom, by the rule of addition.

Fath. And how many times more will make twenty?

Thos. Twice, by the same rule.

Fath. Thou hast worked with thy pencil and slate, Master Thomas! Well, ten times, as I said, took I back the gown for the trimmings; and was she content after all? I warrant you no, or my ears did not pay for it. She wished, she said, that the slattern sempstress had not touched the gown; for nought had she done, but botched it. Now what think you had the sempstress done to the gown?

Thos. To surmise that, I must be learned in the sempstress's art.

Fath. The sempstress's art! Thou hast hit it! Oh, the sweet sempstress! The excellent sempstress! Mistress of her scissors and needles, which are pointless and edgeless to her art! The sempstress had done nothing to the gown; yet raves and storms my mistress at her, for having botched it in the making and altering; and orders her, straight, to make another one; which home the sempstress brings on Tuesday last.

Thos. And found thy fair mistress as many faults with that?

Fath. Not one! She finds it a very pattern of a gown! A well-sitting flounce! The sleeves a fit—the tucker a fit—the trimmings her fancy to a T—ha! ha! ha! and she praises the sempstress—ha! ha! ha! and she smiles at me, and I smile—ha! ha! ha! and the sempstress smiles—ha! ha! ha! Now why did the sempstress smile?

Thos. That she had succeeded so well in her art.

Fath. Thou hast hit it again! The jade must have been born a sempstress! If ever I marry, she shall work for my wife. The gown was the same gown! and there was my mistress's twentieth mood!

Thos. What think you will Master Walter say when he comes back? I fear he'll hardly know his country maid again. Has she yet fixed her wedding-day?

Fath. She has, Master Thomas. I coaxed it from her maid. She marries, Monday week.

Thos. Comes not Master Walter back to-day?

Fath. Your master expects him. [*A ringing.*] Perhaps that's he. I prithee go and open the door; do, Master Thomas, do; for proves it my master, he'll surely question me.

Thos. And what should I do?

Fath. Answer him, Master Thomas, and make him none the wiser. He'll go mad, when he learns how my lady flaunts it! Go! open the door, I prithee. Fifty things, Master Thomas, know you, for one thing that I know! You can turn and twist a matter into any other kind of matter; and then twist and turn it back again, if needs be; so much you servants of the town beat us of the country, Master Thomas. Open the door, now; do, Master Thomas, do! [*They go out.*]

SCENE II.—*A Garden with two Arbours.*

Enter MASTER HEARTWELL and MASTER WALTER, meeting.

Heart. Good Master Walter, welcome back again!

Wal. I'm glad to see you, Master Heartwell!

Heart. How,

I pray you, sped the weighty business which
So sudden call'd you hence?

Wal. Weighty, indeed!

What thou wouldst ne'er expect—wilt scarce believe!
Long-hidden wrong, wondrously come to light,
And great right done! But more of this, anon.
Now of my ward discourse! Likes she the town?
How does she? Is she well? Canst match me her,
Amongst your city maids?

Heart. Nor court ones neither!
She far outstrips them all!

Wal. I knew she would!

What else could follow in a maid so bred?
A pure mind, Master Heartwell!—not a taint
From intercourse with the distemper'd town;
With which all contact was wall'd out, until,
Matured in soundness, I could trust her to it,
Secure against infection!

Heart. Master Walter!

Wal. Well?

Heart. Tell me, prithee, which is likelier
To plough a sea in safety?—he that's wont
To sail in it,—or he that by the chart
Is master of its soundings, bearings,—knows
Its headlands, havens, currents—where 'tis bold,
And where behoves to keep a good look-out?
The one will swim, where drowns the other one!

Wal. The drift of this?

Heart. Do you not guess it?

Wal. Humph!

Heart. If you would train a maid to live in town,
Breed her not in the country!

Wal. Say you so!

And stands she not the test?

Heart. As snow stands fire!
Your country maid has melted all away,
And plays the city lady to the height;—
Her mornings gives to mercers, milliners,
Shoemakers, jewellers, and haberdashers;
Her noons, to calls; her afternoons, to dressing;
Evenings, to plays and drums; and nights, to routs,
Balls, masquerades! Sleep only ends the riot,
Which waking still begins!

Wal. I'm all amaze!

How bears Sir Thomas this?

Heart. Why, patiently;
Though one can see with pain.

Wal. She loves him? Ha! [*Aside.*
That shrug is doubt! She'd ne'er consent to wed him
Unless she loved him!—never! Her young fancy
The pleasures of the town—new things—have caught;
Anon their hold will slacken; she'll become
Her former self again; to its old train
Of sober feelings will her heart return;
And then she'll give it wholly to the man
Her virgin wishes chose!

Heart. Here comes Sir Thomas;
And with him Master Modus.

Wal. Let them pass:
I would not see him, till I speak with her.
[*They retire into one of the arbours.*

Enter CLIFFORD and MODUS.

Clif. A dreadful question is it, when we love,
To ask if love's return'd! I fondly thought
Fair Julia's heart was mine—I doubt it now!
But once last night she danced with me, her hand,
To this gallant and that, engaged, as soon
As ask'd for! Maid that loved would scarce do this?
Nor visit we together as we used,
When first she came to town. She loves me less
Than once she did—or loves me not at all!

Mod. I'm little skill'd, Sir Thomas, in the world:
What mean you now to do?

Clif. Remonstrate with her;
Come to an understanding, and, at once,
If she repents her promise to be mine,
Absolve her from it—and say farewell to her!

Mod. Lo, then, your opportunity—She comes—
My cousin also:—her will I engage,
Whilst you converse together.

Clif. Nay, not yet!
My heart turns coward at the sight of her!'
Stay till it finds new courage! Let them pass.
[*CLIFFORD and MODUS retire into the other arbour.*

Enter JULIA and HELEN.

Helen. So, Monday week will say good morn to thee,
A maid, and bid good night a sober wife!

Julia. That Monday week, I trust, will never come,
That brags to make a sober wife of me!

Helen. How changed you are, my Julia!

Julia. Change breeds change!

Helen. Why wedd'st thou then?

Julia. Because I promised him!

Helen. Thou lov'st him?

Julia. Do I?

Helen. He's a man to love !

A right well-favour'd man !

Julia. Your point's well-favour'd.

Where did you purchase it ? In Gracechurch-street ?

Helen. Pshaw ! never mind my point, but talk of him.

Julia. I'd rather talk with thee about the lace.

Where bought you it ? In Gracechurch-street, Cheapside, Whitechapel, Little Britain ? Can't you say

Where 'twas you bought the lace ?

Helen. In Cheapside, then.

And now then to Sir Thomas ! He is just
The height I like a man.

Julia. Thy feather's just

The height I like a feather ! Mine's too short !

What shall I give thee in exchange for it ?

Helen. What shall I give thee for a minute's talk
About Sir Thomas ?

Julia. Why, thy feather.

Helen. Take it !

And now let's talk about Sir Thomas—Much
He loves you.

Julia. Much indeed, he has a right !

Those know I who would give their eyes to be
Sir Thomas, for my sake !

Helen. Such too, know I.

But 'mong them none that can compare with him,
Not one so graceful.

Julia. What a graceful set

Your feather has !

Helen. Nay, give it back to me,

Unless you pay me for't.

Julia. What wer't to get ?

Helen. A minute's talk with thee about Sir Thomas.

Julia. Talk of his title, and his fortune then.

Clif. [*Aside.*] Indeed ! I would not listen, yet I must !

Julia. An ample fortune, Helen—I shall be

A happy wife ! What routs, what balls, what masques,
What gala days !

Clif. [*Aside.*] For these she marries me !

She'll talk of these !

Julia. Think not, when I am wed,

I'll keep the house as owlet does her tower,

Alone,—when every other bird's on wing.

I'll use my palfrey, Helen; and my coach ;

My barge too for excursion on the Thames :

What drives to Barnet, Hackney, Islington !

What rides to Epping, Hounslow, and Blackheath !

What sails to Greenwich, Woolwich, Fulham, Kew !

I'll set a pattern to your lady wives !

Clif. [*Aside.*] Ay, lady ? Trust me, not at my expense.

Julia. And what a wardrobe ! I'll have change of suits,
For every day in the year ! and sets for days !

My morning dress, my noon dress, dinner dress,
And evening dress ! Then will I show you lace
A foot deep, can I purchase it : if not,
I'll specially bespeak it. Diamonds too !
Not buckles, rings and ear-rings only,—but
Whole necklaces and stomachers of gems !
I'll shine ! be sure I will.

Clif. [*Aside.*] Then shine away ;

Who covets thee my wear thee !—I'm not he !

Julia. And then my title ! Soon as I put on
The ring, I'm Lady Clifford. So I take
Precedence of plain mistress, were she e'en
The richest heiress in the land ! At town
Or country ball, you'll see me take the lead,
While wives that carry on their backs the wealth
To dower a princess, shall give place to me ;—
Will I not profit, think you, by my right ?
Be sure I will ! Marriage shall prove to me
A never-ending pageant. Every day
Shall show how I am spoused ! I will be known
For Lady Clifford all the city through,
And fifty miles the country round about.
Wife of Sir Thomas Clifford, baronet,—
Not perishable knight—who, when he makes
A lady of me, doubtless must expect
To see me play the part of one.

Clif. [*Coming forward.*] Most true ;
But not the part which you design to play.

Julia. A list'ner, sir !

Clif. By chance, and not intent !
Your speech was forced upon mine ear, that ne'er
More thankless duty to my heart discharged !
Would for that heart it ne'er had known the sense
Which tells it 'tis a bankrupt, there, where most
It coveted to be rich, and thought it was so !
O Julia ! is it you ? Could I have set
A coronet upon that stately brow,
Where partial nature hath already bound
A brighter circlet—radiant beauty's own—
I had been proud to see thee proud of it ;
So for the donor thou hadst ta'en the gift,
Not for the gift ta'en him. Could I have pour'd
The wealth of richest Croesus in thy lap,
I had been blest to see thee scatter it ;
So I was still thy riches paramount !

Julia. Know you me, sir !

Clif. I do !—On Monday week
We were to wed ;—and are—so you're content,
The day that wives, you to be widow'd. Take
The privilege of my wife ; be Lady Clifford !
Outshine thy title in the wearing on't !
My coffers, lands, all are at thy command !

Wear all ! but, for myself, she wears not me,
Although the coveted of every eye,
Who would not wear me for myself alone.

Julia. And do you carry it so proudly, sir ?

Clif. Proudly, but still more sorrowfully, lady !
I'll lead thee to the church on Monday week.
Till then, farewell !—and then, farewell for ever !
O Julia, I have ventured for thy love,
Like the bold merchant, who, for only hope
Of some rich gain, all former gains will risk !
Before I ask'd a portion of thy heart,
I perill'd all my own ; and now, all's lost !

[*CLIFFORD and MODUS go out.*]

Julia. Helen !

Helen. What ails you, sweet ?

Julia. I cannot breathe—quick, loose my girdle, oh !

[*Faints.*]

MASTER WALTER and MASTER HEARTWELL come forward.

Wal. Good Master Heartwell, help to take her in,
Whilst I make after him ! and look to her !
Unlucky chance that took me out of town !

[*They go out severally.*]

SCENE III.—*The Street.*

Enter CLIFFORD and STEPHEN, meeting.

Ste. Letters, Sir Thomas.

Clif. Take them home again,
I shall not read them now.

Ste. Your pardon, sir,
But here is one directed strangely.

Clif. How ?

Ste. "To Master Clifford, gentleman, now styled
Sir Thomas Clifford, baronet."

Clif. Indeed !

Whence comes that letter ?

Ste. From abroad.

Clif. Which is it ?

Ste. So please you this, Sir Thomas.

Clif. Give it me.

Ste. That letter brings not news to wish him joy upon. If
he was disturbed before—which I guessed by his looks he was
—he is not more at ease now. His hand to his head ! A most
unwelcome letter ! If it brings him news of disaster, fortune
does not give him his deserts ; for never waited servant upon
a kinder master.

Clif. Stephen !

Ste. Sir Thomas !

Clif. From my door remove
The plate that bears my name.

Ste. The plate, Sir Thomas!

Clif. The plate—collect my servants and instruct them
To make out, each, their claims unto the end
Of their respective terms, and give them in
To my steward. Him and them apprise, good fellow,
That I keep house no more. As you go home,
Call at my coachmaker's and bid him stop
The carriage I bespoke. The one I have
Send with my horses to the mart, whereat
Such things are sold by auction. They're for sale—
Pack up my wardrobe—have my trunks convey'd
To the inn in the next street—and when that's done,
Go round my tradesmen and collect their bills,
And bring them to me, at the inn.

Ste. The inn!

Clif. Yes; I go home no more! Why what's the matter?
What has fallen out to make your eyes fill up?
You'll get another place. I'll certify you
Most honest and industrious, and all
That servant ought to be.

Ste. I see, Sir Thomas,
Some great misfortune has befallen you?

Clif. No!

I have health; I have strength; my reason, Stephen, and
A heart that's clear in truth, with trust in God!
No great disaster can befall the man
Who's still possess'd of these! Good fellow, leave me.
What you would learn, and have a right to know,
I would not tell you now.—Good Stephen, hence!
Mischance has fallen on me—but what of that?
Mischance has fallen on many a better man.
I prithee leave me. I grow sadder while
I see the eye, with which you view my grief.
'Sdeath, they will out! I would have play'd the man,
Had you been less a kind and gentle one.
Now, as you love me, leave me!

Ste. Never master

So well deserved the love of him that served him!

[STEPHEN goes out.]

Clif. Misfortune liketh company! it seldom
Visits its friends alone! Ha, Master Walter,
And ruffled too! I'm in no mood for him.

Enter MASTER WALTER.

Wal. So, Sir—Sir Thomas Clifford!—You are found!

Clif. Well, Master Walter?

Wal. You're a rash young man, sir!
Strong-headed, and wrong-headed—and I fear, sir,
Not over delicate in that fine sense
Which men of honour pride themselves upon!

Clif. Well, Master Walter?

Wal. A young woman's heart, sir,

Is not a stone to carve a posy on !
Which knows not what is writ on't—which you may buy,
Exchange, or sell, sir,—keep or give away, sir :
It is a richer—yet a poorer thing ;
Priceless to him that owns and prizes it ;
Worthless, when own'd, not prized ! which makes the man
That covets it, obtains it, and discards it,—
A fool, if not a villain, sir !

[Half drawing, then returning his sword.]

Clif. Well, sir !

Wal. You never loved my ward, sir !

Clif. The bright Heavens
Bear witness that I did !

Wal. The bright Heavens, sir,
Bear not false witness ! That you loved her not,
Is clear,—for had you loved her, you'd have pluck'd
Your heart from out your breast, ere cast her from your heart !
Old as I am, I know what passion is, sir !
We are wrong'd, sir, wrong'd !

Clif. Nay, listen, Master Walter,
Touching your ward, if wrong is done, I think
On my side lies the grievance—I would not say so,
Did I not know so !—As for love !—look, sir,
That hand 's a widower's, to its first choice sworn
To clasp no second one ! As for amends, sir,
You're free to get them from a man in whom
You've been forestall'd by fortune. Please you read
That letter. Now, sir, judge if life is dear,
To one, so much a loser.

Wal. What, all gone !
Thy cousin living they reported dead !

Clif. Title and land, sir, unto which add love !
All gone, save life—and honour !—which ere I'll lose,
I'll let the other go.

Wal. We're public here,
And may be interrupted. Let us seek
Some spot of privacy. Your letter, sir. *[Gives it back.]*
Though fortune slights you, I'll not slight you ! Not
Your title or the lack of it I heed !
Whether upon the score of love or hate,
With you and you alone I settle, sir.
We've gone too far. 'Twere folly now to part
Without a reckoning.

Clif. Just as you please.

Wal. You've done
A noble lady wrong !

Clif. That lady, sir,
Has done me wrong !

Wal. Go to, thou art a boy !—
Fit to be trusted with a plaything, not
A woman's heart. Thou know'st not what it is !
And that I'll prove to thee, soon as we find

Convenient place. Come on, sir!—You shall get
 A lesson that shall serve you for the rest
 Of your life. I'll make you own her, sir, a piece
 Of Nature's handiwork, as costly, free
 From bias, flaw, and fair, as ever yet
 Her cunning hand turn'd out. Come on, sir!—Come!
[*They go out.*]

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Drawing Room.*

Enter LORD TINSEL and the EARL OF ROCHDALE.

Tin. Refuse a lord! A saucy lady this.
 I scarce can credit it.

Roch. She'll change her mind.

My agent, Master Walter, is her guardian.

Tin. How can you keep that Hunchback in his office?
 He mocks you!

Roch. He is useful. Never heed him.
 My offer now do I present through him.
 He has the title-deeds of my estates,
 She'll listen to their wooing. I must have her.
 Not that I love her, but that all allow
 She's fairest of the fair.

Tin. Distinguish'd well!
 'Twere most unseemly for a lord to love!—
 Leave that to commoners! 'Tis vulgar—she's
 Betroth'd, you tell me, to Sir Thomas Clifford?

Roch. Yes.

Tin. That a commoner should thwart a lord!
 Yet not a commoner. A baronet
 Is fish and flesh. Nine parts plebeian, and
 Patrician in the tenth. Sir Thomas Clifford!
 A man, they say, of brains! I abhor brains
 As I do tools: They're things mechanical.
 So far are we above our forefathers:—
 They to their brains did owe their titles, as
 Do lawyers, doctors. We to nothing owe them,
 Which makes us far the nobler.

Roch. Is it so?

Tin. Believe me. You shall profit by my training;
 You grow a lord apace. I saw you meet
 A bevy of your former friends, who fain
 Had shaken hands with you. You gave them fingers!
 You're now another man. You're house is changed,—
 Your table changed—your retinue—your horse—

Where once you rode a hack, you now back blood ;—
Befits it, then, you also change your friends !

Enter WILLIAMS.

Will. A gentleman would see your lordship.

Tin. Sir !

What's that ?

Will. A gentleman would see his lordship.

Tin. How know you, sir, his lordship is at home ?

Is he at home because he goes not out ?

He's not at home, though there you see him, sir ;

Unless he certify that he's at home !

Bring up the name of the gentleman, and then

Your lord will know if he's at home or not.

[*WILLIAMS goes out.*]

Your man was porter to some merchant's door,

Who never taught him better breeding

Than to speak the vulgar truth ! Well, sir ?

WILLIAMS having re-entered.

Will. His name,

So please your lordship, is Markham.

Tin. Do you know

The thing ?

Rock. Right well ! I' faith a hearty fellow,
Son to a worthy tradesman, who would do
Great things with little means ; so enter'd him
In the Temple. A good fellow, on my life,
Nought smacking of his stock !

Tin. You've said enough !

His lordship's not at home. [*WILLIAMS goes out.*] We do
not go

By hearts, but orders ! Had he family—

Blood—though it only were a drop—his heart

Would pass for something ; lacking such desert,

Were it ten times the heart it is, 'tis nought !

Enter WILLIAMS.

Will. One Master Jones hath ask'd to see your lordship.

Tin. And what was your reply to Master Jones ?

Will. I knew not if his lordship was at home.

Tin. You'll do. Who's Master Jones ?

Rock. A curate's son.

Tin. A curate's ! Better be a yeoman's son !

Were it the rector's son, he might be known ;

Because the rector is a rising man,

And may become a bishop. He goes light.

The curate ever hath a loaded back !

He may be call'd the yeoman of the church,

That sweating does his work, and drudges on ;

While lives the hopeful rector at his ease.

How made you his acquaintance, pray ?

Roch. We read
Latin and Greek together.

Tin. Dropping them—
As, now that you're a lord, of course you've done—
Drop him—You'll say his lordship's not at home.

Will. So please your lordship, I forgot to say,
One Richard Cricket likewise is below.

Tin. Who?—Richard Cricket! You must see him, Roch-
dale!

A noble little fellow! A great man, sir!
Not knowing whom, you would be nobody!
I won five thousand pounds by him!

Roch. Who is he?
I never heard of him.

Tin. What! never heard
Of Richard Cricket!—Never heard of him!
Why, he's the jockey of Newmarket! You
May win a cup by him, or else a sweepstakes!
I bade him call upon you. You must see him.
His lordship is at home to Richard Cricket.

Roch. Bid him wait in the ante-room. [*WILLIAMS goes out.*]

Tin. The ante-room?
The best room in your house! You do not know
The use of Richard Cricket! Show him, sir,
Into the drawing-room. Your lordship needs
Must keep a racing-stud, and you'll do well
To make a friend of Richard Cricket. [*WILLIAMS re-enters.*]

Well, sir?
Will. So please your lordship, a petition.

Tin. What!
Hadst not a service 'mongst the Hottentots
Ere thou camest hither, friend? Present thy lord
With a petition! At mechanics' doors,
At tradesmen's, shopkeepers', and merchants' only,
Have such things leave to knock! Make thy lord's gate
A wicket to a workhouse! Let us see it—
Subscriptions to a book of poetry!
Who heads the list?—Cornelius Tense, A.M.
Which means he construes Greek and Latin, works
Problems in mathematics, can chop logic,
And is a conjurer in philosophy,
Both natural and moral.—Pshaw! a man
Whom nobody, that is anybody, knows!
Who, think you, follows him? Why, an M.D.,
An F.R.S., an F.A.S., and then
A D.D., Doctor of Divinity,
Ushering in an LL.D., which means
Doctor of Laws—their union here, no doubt,
The difference of their trades! There's nothing here
But languages, and sciences, and arts!
Not an iota of nobility!
We cannot give our names. Take back the paper,

And tell the bearer there's no answer for him :—
That is the lordly way of saying "No."
But talking of subscriptions, here is one
To which your lordship may affix your name.

Roch. Pray, who's the object?

Tin. A most worthy man!

A man of singular deserts! a man
In serving whom your lordship will serve me,—
Signor Cantata.

Roch. He's a friend of yours?

Tin. O, no, I know him not! I've not that pleasure.
But Lady Dangle knows him; she's his friend.
He will oblige us with a set of concerts,
Six concerts to the set.—The set, three guineas.
Your lordship will subscribe?

Roch. O, by all means!

Tin. How many sets of tickets? Two at least.
You'll like to take a friend? I'll set you down
Six guineas to Signor Cantata's concerts.
And now, my Lord, we'll to him; then we'll walk.

Roch. Nay, I would wait the lady's answer.

Tin. Wait!

Take an excursion to the country! Let
Her answer wait for you!

Roch. Indeed!

Tin. Indeed!

Befits a lord nought like indifference.
Say an estate should fall to you, you'd take it,
As it concern'd more a stander by
Than you! As you're a lord, be sure you ever
Make light of that, which other men make much of;
Nor do the thing they do, but the right contrary.
Where the distinction else 'twixt them and you? [*They go out.*]

SCENE II.—*An Apartment in Master Heartwell's House.*

MASTER WALTER *discovered looking through title-deeds and papers.*

Wal. So falls out everything, as I would have it,
Exact in place and time! This lord's advances
Receives she,—as, I augur, in the spleen
Of wounded pride she will,—my course is clear.
She comes—All's well! The tempest rages still!

JULIA enters, and paces the room in a state of high excitement.

Julia. What have my eyes to do with water? Fire
Becomes them better!

Wal. True!

Julia. Yet, must I weep
To be so monitor'd, and by a man!—
A man that was my slave! whom I have seen

Kneel at my feet from morn till noon, content
 With leave to only gaze upon my face,
 And tell me what he read there,—till the page
 I knew by heart, I 'gan to doubt I knew,
 Emblazon'd by the comment of his tongue!
 And he to lesson me! Let him come here
 On Monday week; he ne'er leads me to church!
 I would not profit by his rank, or wealth,
 Though kings might call him cousin, for their sake!
 I'll show him I have pride!

Wal. You're very right!

Julia. He would have had to-day our wedding-day!
 I fix'd a month from this. He pray'd and pray'd;
 I dropp'd a week. He pray'd and pray'd the more!
 I dropp'd a second one. Still more he pray'd!
 And I took off another week,—and now
 I have his leave to wed, or not to wed!
 He'll see that I have pride!

Wal. And so he ought.

Julia. O! for some way to bring him to my foot!
 But he should lie there! Why, 'twill go abroad
 That he has cast me off.—That there should live
 The man could say so!—Or that I should live
 To be the leavings of a man!

Wal. Thy case
 I own a hard one!

Julia. Hard? 'Twill drive me mad!
 His wealth and title!—I refused a lord—
 I did!—that privily implored my hand,
 And never cared to tell him on't! So much
 I hate him now, that lord should not in vain
 Implore my hand again!

Wal. You'd give it him?

Julia. I would.

Wal. You'd wed that lord?

Julia. That lord I'd wed;—
 Or any other lord,—only to show him
 That I could wed above him!

Wal. Give me your hand
 And word to that.

Julia. There! Take my hand and word!

Wal. That lord hath offer'd you his hand again.

Julia. He has?

Wal. Your father knows it, and approves of him.
 There are the title-deeds of the estates,
 Sent for my jealous scrutiny. All sound,—
 No flaw, or speck, that e'en the lynx-eyed law
 Itself could find. A lord of many lands!
 In Berkshire half a county; and the same
 In Wiltshire, and in Lancashire! Across
 The Irish Sea a principality!
 And not a rood with bond or lien on it!

Wilt give that lord a wife? Wilt make thyself
A countess? Here's the proffer of his hand.

Write thou content, and wear a coronet!

Julia. [*Eagerly.*] Give me the paper!

Wal. There! Here's pen and ink.

Sit down. Why do you pause? A flourish of
The pen, and you're a countess!

Julia. My poor brain

Whirls round and round! I would not wed him now,
Were he more lowly at my feet to sue
Than e'er he did!

Wal. Wed whom?

Julia. Sir Thomas Clifford!

Wal. You're right.

Julia. His rank and wealth are roots to doubt;
And while they lasted, still the weed would grow,
Howe'er you pluck'd it.—No! That's o'er—That's done.
Was never lady wrong'd so foul as I!

[*Weeps.*]

Wal. Thou'rt to be pitied.

Julia. [*Aroused.*] Pitied! Not so bad
As that!

Wal. Indeed thou art, to love the man
That spurns thee!

Julia. Love him!—Love! If hate could find
A word more harsh than its own name, I'd take it,
To speak the love I bear him!

[*Weeps.*]

Wal. Write thy own name,
And prove how near akin thy hate's to hate.

Julia. [*Writes.*] 'Tis done!

Wal. 'Tis well! I'll come to you anon!

[*Goes out.*]

Julia [*alone*]. I'm glad 'tis done! I'm very glad 'tis done!
I've done the thing I ought. From my disgrace
This lord shall lift me 'bove the reach of scorn—
That idly wags its tongue, where wealth and state
Need only beckon to have crowds to laud!
Then how the tables change! The hand he spurn'd
His betters take! Let me remember that!
I'll grace my rank! I will! I'll carry it
As I was born to it! I warrant none
Shall say it fits me not:—but, one and all
Confess I wear it bravely, as I ought!
And he shall hear it! Ay, and he shall see it!
I shall roll by him in an equipage
Would mortgage his estate—but he shall own
His slight of me was my advancement! Love me!
He never loved me! if he had, he ne'er
Had given me up! Love's not a spider's web
But fit to mesh a fly—that you can break
By only blowing on't! He never loved me!
He knows not what love is!—or, if he does,
He has not been o'er chary of his peace!
And that he'll find when I'm another's wife,

Lost!—lost to him for ever! Tears again!
 Why should I weep for him? Who make their woes,
 Deserve them! What have I to do with tears?

Enter HELEN.

Helen. News, Julia, news!

Julia. What! is't about Sir Thomas?

Helen. Sir Thomas, say you? He's no more Sir Thomas!
 That cousin lives, as heir to whom, his wealth
 And title came to him.

Julia. Was he not dead?

Helen. No more than I am dead.

Julia. I would 'twere not so.

Helen. What say you, Julia?

Julia. Nothing.

Helen. I could kiss
 That cousin! couldn't you, Julia?

Julia. Wherefore?

Helen. Why

For coming back to life again, as 'twere
 Upon his cousin to revenge you.

Julia. Helen!

Helen. Indeed 'tis true. With what a sorry grace
 The gentleman will bear himself without
 His title! Master Clifford! Have you not
 Some token to return him? some love-letter?
 Some brooch? some pin? some anything? I'll be
 Your messenger, for nothing but the pleasure
 Of calling him plain "Master Clifford."

Julia. Helen!

Helen. Or has he aught of thine? Write to him, Julia,
 Demanding it! Do, Julia, if you love me;
 And I'll direct it in a schoolboy's hand,
 As round as I can write, "To Master Clifford."

Julia. Helen!

Helen. I'll think of fifty thousand ways
 To mortify him! I've a cousin, Julia,
 A care-for-nought, at mischief. Him I'll set
 With twenty other madcaps like himself,
 To walk the streets the traitor most frequents,
 And give him salutation as he passes—
 "How do you, Master Clifford?"

Julia. [*Highly incensed.*] Helen!

Helen. Bless me!

Julia. I hate you, Helen!

Enter MODUS.

Mod. Joy for you, fair lady!
 Our baronet is now plain gentleman—
 And hardly that, not master of the means
 To bear himself as such. The kinsman lives
 Whose only rumour'd death gave wealth to him,

And title. A hard creditor he proves,
Who keeps strict reckoning—will have interest,
As well as principal. A ruin'd man
Is now Sir Thomas Clifford!

Helen. I am glad on't.

Mod. And so am I. A scurvy trick it was
He served you, madam. Use a lady so!
I merely bore with him. I never liked him.

Helen. No more did I. No, never could I think
He look'd his title.

Mod. No, nor acted it.

If rightly they report, he ne'er disbursed
To entertain his friends, 'tis broadly said,
A hundred pounds in the year! He was most poor
In the appointments of a man of rank,
Possessing wealth like his. His horses, hacks!
His gentleman a footman! and his footman,
A groom! The sports, that men of quality
And spirit countenance, he kept aloof from;
From scruple of economy, not taste,—
As racing and the like. In brief, he lack'd
Those shining points that, more than name, denote
High breeding; and, moreover, was a man
Of very shallow learning.

Julia. Silence, sir!

For shame!

Helen. Why, Julia!

Julia. Speak not to me! [*Turning to MODUS.*] Poor!
Most poor! I tell you, sir, he was the making
Of fifty gentlemen—each one of whom
Were more than peer for thee! His title, sir,
Lent him no grace he did not pay it back!
Though it had been the highest of the high,
He would have look'd it, felt it, acted it,
As thou couldst ne'er have done! When found you out
You liked him not? It was not ere to-day!
Or that base spirit I must reckon yours
Which smiles where it would scowl—can stoop to hate
And fear to show it! He was your better, sir,
And is!—Ay, is! though stripp'd of rank and wealth,
His nature 'bove or fortune's love or spite,
To blazon or to blur it!

[*Retires.*]

Mod. [*To HELEN.*] I was told
Much to disparage him—I know not wherefore.

Helen. And so was I, and know as much the cause.

Enter MASTER WALTER, with parchments.

Wal. Joy, my Julia! Give you joy, my girl!
Impatient love has foresight! Lo you here
The marriage-deeds fill'd up, except a blank
To write your jointure. What you will, my Julia!
Is this a lover? Look! Three thousand pounds

Per annum for your private charges! Ha!
 There's pin-money! Is this a lover? Mark
 What acres, forests, tenements, are tax'd
 For your revenue; and so set apart,
 That finger cannot touch them, save thine own.
 Is this a lover? What good fortune's thine!
 Thou dost not speak; but, 'tis the way with joy!
 With richest heart, it has the poorest tongue!

Mod. What great good fortune's this you speak of, sir?

Wal. A coronet, Master Modus! You behold
 The wife elect, sir, of no less a man
 Than the new Earl of Rochdale—heir of him
 That's recently deceased.

Helen. My dearest Julia,
 Much joy to you!

Mod. All good attend you, madam!

Wal. This letter brings excuses from his lordship,
 Whose absence it accounts for. He repairs
 To his estate in Lancashire, and thither
 We follow.

Julia. When, sir?

Wal. Now. This very hour.

Julia. This very hour! O cruel, fatal haste!

Wal. "O cruel, fatal haste!" What meanest thou?
 Have I done wrong to do thy bidding, then?
 I have done no more. Thou wast an off-cast bride,
 And wouldst be an affianced one—Thou art so!
 Thou'dst have the slight that mark'd thee out for scorn,
 Converted to a means of gracing thee—
 It is so! If our wishes come too soon,
 What can make sure of welcome? In my zeal
 To win thee thine, thou know'st, at any time
 I'd play the steed, whose will to serve his lord,
 With his last breath gives his last bound for him!
 Since only noon have I despatch'd what well
 Had kept a brace of clerks, and more, on foot,—
 And then, perhaps, had been to do again!—
 Not finish'd sure, complete—the compact firm,
 As fate itself had seal'd it!

Julia. Give you thanks!

Wal. Take thy lord's letter! Well?

Enter THOMAS, with a letter.

Thos. This letter, sir,
 The gentleman that served Sir Thomas Clifford—
 Or him that was Sir Thomas—gave to me
 For Mistress Julia.

Julia. Give it me! [*Throwing away the one she holds.*]

Wal. [*Snatching it.*] For what?
 Wouldst read it? He's a bankrupt! stripp'd of title,
 House, chattels, lands, and all! A naked bankrupt,
 With neither purse, nor trust! Wouldst read his letter?

A beggar! Yea, a very beggar!—fasts,
Unless he dines on alms! To send thee letter!
I burst with choler! Thus I treat his letter!

[Tears and throws it on the ground.]

So! I was wrong to let him ruffle me;
He is not worth the spending anger on!
I prithee, Master Modus, use despatch,
And presently make ready for our ride.
You, Helen, to my Julia look—a change
Of dresses will suffice. She must have new ones,
Matches for her new state! Haste, friends. My Julia!
Why stand you poring there upon the ground?
Time flies. Your rise astounds you? Never heed—
You'll play my lady countess like a queen! *[They go out.]*

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Room in the Earl of Rochdale's.*

Enter HELEN.

Helen. I'm weary wandering from room to room;
A castle after all is but a house—
The dulllest one when lacking company.
Were I at home, I could be company
Unto myself. I see not Master Walter.
He's ever with his ward. I see not her.
By Master Walter will she bide, alone.
My father stops in town. I can't see him.
My cousin makes his books his company.
I'll go to bed and sleep. No—I'll stay up
And plague my cousin into making love!
For, that he loves me, shrewdly I suspect.
How dull he is, that hath not sense to see
What lies before him, and he'd like to find!
I'll change my treatment of him. Cross him, where
Before I used to humour him. He comes,
Poring upon a book. What's that you read?

Enter MODUS.

Mod. Latin, sweet cousin.

Helen. 'Tis a naughty tongue,
I fear, and teaches men to lie.

Mod. To lie!

Helen. You study it. You call your cousin sweet,
And treat her as you would a crab. As sour
'Twould seem you think her, so you covet her!

Why how the monster stares, and looks about !
You construe Latin, and can't construe that !

Mod. I never studied women.

Helen. No ; nor men.

Else would you better know their ways : nor read
In presence of a lady. [*Strikes the book from his hand.*]

Mod. Right you say,
And well you served me, cousin, so to strike
The volume from my hand. I own my fault ;
So please you may I pick it up again ?
I'll put it in my pocket !

Helen. Pick it up.

He fears me as I were his grandmother !

What is the book ?

Mod. 'Tis Ovid's Art of Love.

Helen. That Ovid was a fool !

Mod. In what ?

Helen. In that :

To call that thing an art, which art is none.

Mod. And is not love an art ?

Helen. Are you a fool,

As well as Ovid ? Love an art ! No art
But taketh time and pains to learn. Love comes
With neither ! Is't to hoard such grain as that,
You went to college ? Better stay at home,
And study homely English !

Mod. Nay, you know not
The argument.

Helen. I don't ? I know it better
Than ever Ovid did ! The face,—the form,—
The heart,—the mind we fancy, cousin ; that's
The argument ! Why, cousin, you know nothing !
Suppose a lady were in love with thee,
Couldst thou by Ovid, cousin, find it out ?
Couldst find it out, wert thou in love, thyself ?
Could Ovid, cousin, teach thee to make love ?
I could, that never read him ! You begin
With melancholy ; then to sadness ; then
To sickness ; then to dying—but not die !
She would not let thee, were she of my mind !
She'd take compassion on thee. Then for hope ;
From hope to confidence ; from confidence
To boldness ;—then you'd speak ; at first entreat ;
Then urge ; then flout ; then argue ; then enforce ;
Make prisoner of her hand ; besiege her waist ;
Threaten her lips with storming ; keep thy word
And carry her ! My sampler 'gainst thy Ovid !
Why cousin, are you frighten'd, that you stand
As you were stricken dumb ? The case is clear,
You are no soldier ! You'll ne'er win a battle.
You care too much for blows !

Mod. You wrong me there.

At school I was the champion of my form ;
And since I went to college——

Helen. That for college !

Mod. Nay, hear me !

Helen. Well ? What, since you went to college ?
You know what men are set down for, who boast
Of their own bravery ! Go on, brave cousin :
What, since you went to college ? Was there not
One Quentin Halworth there ? You know there was,
And that he was your master !

Mod. He my master ?
Thrice was he worsted by me !

Helen. Still was he
Your master.

Mod. He allow'd I had the best !
Allow'd it, mark me ! nor to me alone,
But twenty I could name.

Helen. And master'd you
At last ! Confess it, cousin, 'tis the truth !
A proctor's daughter you did both affect—
Look at me and deny it !—Of the twain
She more affected you ;—I've caught you now,
Bold cousin ! Mark you ? opportunity
On opportunity she gave you, sir,—
Deny it if you can !—but though to others,
When you discoursed of her, you were a flame ;
To her you were a wick that would not light,
Though held in the very fire ! And so he won her—
Won her, because he woo'd her like a man ;
For all your cuffings, cuffing you again
With most usurious interest ! Now, sir,
Protest that you are valiant !

Mod. Cousin Helen !

Helen. Well, sir ?

Mod. The tale is all a forgery !

Helen. A forgery !

Mod. From first to last ; ne'er spoke I
To a proctor's daughter, while I was at college.

Helen. Well, 'twas a scrivener's then—or somebody's.
But what concerns it whose ? Enough, you loved her !
And, shame upon you, let another take her !

Mod. Cousin, I tell you, if you'll only hear me,
I loved no woman while I was at college—
Save one, and her I fancied ere I went there.

Helen. Indeed ! Now I'll retreat, if he's advancing.
Comes he not on ! O what a stock 's the man !
Well, cousin ?

Mod. Well ! What more wouldst have me say ?
I think, I've said enough.

Helen. And so think I.
I did but jest with you. You are not angry ?
Take hands ! Why, cousin, do you squeeze me so ?

Mod. [*Letting her go.*] I swear I squeezed you not!

Helen. You did not?

Mod. No,

May I die if I did!

Helen. Why then you did not, cousin,
So let's shake hands again—[*He takes her hand as before.*]
O go! and now

Read Ovid! Cousin, will you tell me one thing:

Wore lovers ruffs in master Ovid's time?

Behoved him teach them, then, to put them on;—

And that you have to learn. Hold up your head!

Why, cousin, how you blush! Plague on the ruff!

I cannot give't a set. You're blushing still!

Why do you blush, dear cousin? So!—'twill beat me!

I'll give it up.

Mod. Nay, prithee don't—try on!

Helen. And if I do, I fear you'll think me bold.

Mod. For what?

Helen. To trust my face so near to thine.

Mod. I know not what you mean!

Helen. I'm glad you don't!

Cousin, I own right well-behaved you are,

Most marvellously well-behaved! They've bred

You well at college. With another man

My lips would be in danger! Hang the ruff!

Mod. Nay, give it up, nor plague thyself, dear cousin.

Helen. Dear fool! [*Throws the ruff on the ground.*]

I swear the ruff is good for just

As little as its master! There!—'Tis spoil'd—

You'll have to get another! Hie for it,

And wear it in the fashion of a wisp,

Ere I adjust it for thee! Farewell, cousin!

You'd need to study Ovid's Art of Love! [*HELEN goes out.*]

Mod. [*solus*]. Went she in anger! I will follow her,—

No, I will not! Heigho! I love my cousin!

O would that she loved me! Why did she taunt me

With backwardness in love? What could she mean?

Sees she I love her, and so laughs at me,

Because I lack the front to woo her? Nay,

I'll woo her then! Her lips shall be in danger,

When next she trusts them near me! Look'd she at me

To-day, as never did she look before!

A bold heart, Master Modus! 'Tis a saying,

A faint one never won fair lady yet!

I'll woo my cousin, come what will on't. Yes:

[*Begins reading again, throws down the book.*]

Hang Ovid's Art of Love! I'll woo my cousin! [*Goes out.*]

SCENE II.—*The Banqueting-room in the Earl of Rochdale's Mansion.*

Enter MASTER WALTER and JULIA.

Wal. This is the banqueting-room. Thou see'st as far
It leaves the last behind, as that excels
The former ones. All is proportion here
And harmony! Observe! The massy pillars
May well look proud to bear the gilded dome.
You mark those full-length portraits? They're the heads,
The stately heads, of his ancestral line.
Here o'er the feast they haply still preside!
Mark those medallions! Stand they forth or not
In bold and fair relief? Is not this brave?

Julia. [*Abstractedly.*] It is.

Wal. It should be so. To cheer the blood
That flows in noble veins is made the feast
That gladdens here! You see this drapery?
'Tis richest velvet! Fringe and tassels, gold!
Is not this costly?

Julia. Yes.

Wal. And chaste, the while?
Both chaste and costly?

Julia. Yes.

Wal. Come hither! There's a mirror for you. See!
One sheet from floor to ceiling! Look into it,
Salute its mistress! Dost not know her?

Julia. [*Sighing deeply.*] Yes!

Wal. And sighest thou to know her? Wait until
To-morrow, when the banquet shall be spread
In the fair hall; the guests—already bid,
Around it; here, her lord; and there, herself;
Presiding o'er the cheer that hails him bridegroom,
And her the happy bride! Dost hear me?

Julia. [*Sighing still more deeply.*] Yes.

Wal. These are the day-rooms only, we have seen,
For public and domestic uses kept.
I'll show you now the lodging-rooms.

[*Goes, then turns and observes JULIA standing perfectly abstracted.*]

You're tired.

Let it be till after dinner then. Yet one
I'd like thee much to see—the bridal chamber.

[*JULIA starts, crosses her hands upon her breast, and looks upwards.*]

I see you're tired: yet it is worth the viewing,
If only for the tapestry which shows
The needle like the pencil glows with life;

[*Brings down chairs,—they sit.*]

The story's of a page who loved the dame
e served—a princess!—Love's a heedless thing!

That never takes account of obstacles ;
 Makes plains of mountains, rivulets of seas,
 That part it from its wish. So proved the page,
 Who from a state so lowly, look'd so high ;—
 But love's a greater lackwit still than this.
 Say it aspires—that's gain ! Love stoops—that's loss !
 You know what comes. The princess loved the page.
 Shall I go on, or here leave off ?

Julia. Go on.

Wal. Each side of the chamber shows a different stage
 Of this fond page, and fonder lady's love.*
 First—no, it is not that.

Julia. Oh, recollect !

Wal. And yet it is.

Julia. No doubt it is. What is't ?

Wal. He holds to her a salver, with a cup,
 Which, fraught with wine, his heart, o'erfraught with love,
 Doth mock ; as speak his looks ! She heeds him not,
 For too great heed of him :—but seems to hold
 Debate betwixt her passion and her pride—
 That's like to lose the day. You read it in
 Her vacant eye, knit brow, and parted lips,
 Which speak a heart too busy all within
 To note what's done without. Like you the tale ?

Julia. I list to every word.

Wal. The next side paints
 The page upon his knee. He has told his tale ;
 And found that when he lost his heart, he play'd
 No losing game ; but won a richer one !
 There may you read in him, how love would seem
 Most humble when most bold,—you question which
 Appears to kiss her hand—his breath or lips !
 In her you read how wholly lost is she
 Who loves beneath herself ! Shall I give o'er ?

Julia. Nay, tell it to the end. Is't melancholy ?

Wal. To answer that, would mar the story.

Julia. Right.

Wal. The third side now we come to.

* In representation, the passages following this are curtailed—
 and the scene runs as follows :—Master Walter continues—

The first side shows their passion in the dawn—
 In the next side 'tis shining open day—
 In the third there's clouding—I but touch on these
 To make a long tale brief, and bring thee to
 The last side.

Julia. What shows that ?

Wal. The fate of love
 That will not be advised.—The scene's a dungeon,
 Its tenant is the page—he lies in fetters.

Julia. Hard !

Hard as the steel, the hands that put them on ! &c.

Julia. What shows that ?

Wal. The page and princess still. But stands her sire
Between them. Stern he grasps his daughter's arm,
Whose eyes like fountains play ; while through her tears
Her passion shines, as through the fountain-drops,
The sun ! His minions crowd around the page !
They drag him to a dungeon.

Julia. Hapless youth !

Wal. Hapless indeed, that's twice a captive ! heart
And body both in bonds. But that's the chain,
Which balance cannot weigh, rule measure, touch
Define the texture of, or eye detect,
That's forgéd by the subtle craft of love !
No need to tell you that he wears it. Such
The cunning of the hand that plied the loom,
You've but to mark the straining of his eye,
To feel the coil yourself !

Julia. I feel't without !

You've finish'd with the third side ; now the fourth !

Wal. It brings us to a dungeon, then.

Julia. The page,
The thrall of love, more than the dungeon's thrall,
Is there ?

Wal. He is. He lies in fetters.

Julia. Hard !

Hard as the steel the hands that put them on.

Wal. Some one unrivets them !

Julia. The princess ? 'Tis !

Wal. It is another page.

Julia. It is herself !

Wal. Her skin is fair ; and his is berry-brown.
His locks are raven black ; and hers are gold.

Julia. Love's cunning in disguises ! Spite of locks,
Skin, vesture,—it is she, and only she !
What will not constant woman do for love
That's loved with constancy ! Set her the task,
Virtue approving, that will baffle her !
O'ertax her stooping, patience, courage, wit !
My life upon it, 'tis the princess' self,
Transform'd into a page !

Wal. The dungeon door
Stands open, and you see beyond——

Julia. Her father !

Wal. No ; a steed.

Julia. [*Starting up.*] O, welcome steed,
My heart bounds at the thought of thee ! Thou comest
To bear the page from bonds to liberty.
What else ?

Wal. [*Rising.*] The story's told.

Julia. Too briefly told ;
O happy princess, that had wealth and state
To lay them down for love ! Whose constant love

Appearances approved, not falsified !
A winner in thy cost, as well as gain.

Wal. Weighs love so much ?

Julia. What would you weigh 'gainst love
That's true ? Tell me with what you'd turn the scale ?
Yea, make the index waver ? Wealth ?—A feather !
Rank ?—Tinsel against bullion in the balance !
The love of kindred ?—That to set 'gainst love !
Friendship comes nearest to't ; but put love in,
And friendship kicks the beam !—Weigh nothing 'gainst it !
Weigh love against the world !

Yet are they happy that have nought to say to it.

Wal. And such a one art thou. Who wisely wed,
Wed happily. The love thou speak'st of,
A flower is only, that its season has,
Which they must look to see the withering of,
Who pleasure in its budding and its bloom !
But wisdom is the constant evergreen
Which lives the whole year through ! Be that your flower !

Enter a Servant.

Well ?

Serv. My lord's secretary is without.
He brings a letter for her ladyship,
And craves admittance to her.

Wal. Show him in.

Julia. No.

Wal. Thou must see him. To show slight to him,
Were slighting him that sent him. Show him in !

[*Servant goes out.*]

Some errand proper for thy private ear,
Besides the letter he may bring. What mean
This paleness and this trembling ? Mark me, Julia !
If, from these nuptials, which thyself invited—
Which at thy seeking came—thou wouldst be freed ;
Thou hast gone too far ! Receding were disgrace,
Sooner than see thee suffer which, the hearts
That love thee most, would wish thee dead ! Reflect !
Take thought ! Collect thyself ! With dignity
Receive thy bridegroom's messenger ! for sure
As dawns to-morrow's sun, to-morrow night
Sees thee a wedded bride !

[*Goes out.*]

Julia [*alone*]. A wedded bride !
Is it a dream ? Is it a phantasm ? 'Tis
Too horrible for reality ! for aught else
Too palpable ! O would it were a dream !
How would I bless the sun that waked me from it !
I perish ! Like some desperate mariner
Impatient of a strange and hostile shore,
Who rashly hoists his sail and puts to sea,
And being fast on reefs and quicksands borne,
Essays in vain once more to make the land,

Whence wind and current drive him ; I'm wreck'd
 By mine own act ! What ! no escape ? no hope ?
 None ! I must e'en abide these hated nuptials !
 Hated !—Ah ! own it, and then curse thyself !
 That madest the bane thou loathest—for the love
 Thou bear'st to one who never can be thine !
 Yes—love ! Deceive thyself no longer. False
 To say 'tis pity for his fall,—respect,
 Engender'd by a hollow world's disdain,
 Which hoots when fickle fortune cheers no more !
 'Tis none of these : 'tis love—and if not love,
 Why then idolatry ! Ay, that's the name
 To speak the broadest, deepest, strongest passion,
 That ever woman's heart was borne away by !
 He comes ! Thou'dst play the lady,—play it now !

*Enter a Servant, conducting CLIFFORD, plainly attired as the
 EARL OF ROCHDALE'S Secretary.*

Servant. His lordship's secretary. [Servant goes out.]

Julia. Speaks he not ?

Or does he wait for orders to unfold
 His business ? Stopp'd his business till I spoke,
 I'd hold my peace for ever !

[CLIFFORD kneels ; presenting a letter.]

Does he kneel ?

A lady am I to my heart's content !
 Could he unmake me that which claims his knee,
 I'd kneel to him,—I would ! I would !—Your will ?

Clif. This letter from my lord.

Julia. O fate ! who speaks ?

Clif. The secretary of my lord.

Julia. I breathe !

I could have sworn 'twas he !

[Makes an effort to look at him, but is unable.]

So like the voice—

I dare not look, lest there the form should stand !
 How came he by that voice ? 'Tis Clifford's voice,
 If ever Clifford spoke ! My fears come back—
 Clifford the secretary of my lord !
 Fortune hath freaks, but none so mad as that !
 It cannot be !—It should not be !—A look,
 And all were set at rest. [Tries to look at him again, but cannot.]
 So strong my fears,

Dread to confirm them takes away the power
 To try and end them ! Come the worst, I'll look !

[She tries again ; and again is unequal to the task.]

I'd sink before him if I met his eye !

Clif. Will't please your ladyship to take the letter ?

Julia. There Clifford speaks again ! Not Clifford's heart
 Could more make Clifford's voice ! Not Clifford's tongue
 And lips more frame it into Clifford's speech !
 A question, and 'tis over ! Know I you ?

Clif. Reverse of fortune, lady, changes friends ;
It turns them into strangers. What I am
I have not always been !

Julia. Could I not name you ?

Clif. If your disdain for one, perhaps too bold
When hollow fortune call'd him favourite,—
Now by her fickleness perforce reduced
To play an humbler part, would suffer you—

Julia. I might ?

Clif. You might !

Julia. Oh, Clifford ! is it you ?

Clif. Your answer to my lord.

[*Gives the letter.*

Julia. Your lord !

[*Mechanically taking it.*

Clif. Wilt write it ?

Or, will it please you send a verbal one ?

I'll bear it faithfully.

Julia. You'll bear it ?

Clif. Madam,

Your pardon, but my haste is somewhat urgent.
My lord's impatient, and to use despatch
Were his repeated orders.

Julia. Orders ? Well,
I'll read the letter, sir. 'Tis right you mind
His lordship's orders. They are paramount !
Nothing should supersede them !—stand beside them !
They merit all your care, and have it ! Fit,
Most fit they should ! Give me the letter, sir.

Clif. You have it, madam.

Julia. So ! How poor a thing

I look ! so lost, while he is all himself !

Have I no pride ?

[*She rings, the Servant enters.*

Paper, and pen, and ink !

If he can freeze, 'tis time that I grow cold !

I'll read the letter.

[*Opens it, and holds it as about to read it.*

Mind his orders ! So !

Quickly he fits his habits to his fortunes !

He serves my lord with all his will ! His heart's

In his vocation. So ! Is this the letter ?

'Tis upside down—and here I'm poring on't !

Most fit I let him see me play the fool !

Shame. Let me be myself !

[*A Servant enters with materials for writing.*

A table, sir,

And chair.

[*The Servant brings a table and chair, and goes out.*

*She sits awhile, vacantly gazing on the letter—then
looks at CLIFFORD.*

How plainly shows his humble suit !

It fits not him that wears it ! I have wrong'd him !

He can't be happy—does not look it !—is not.

That eye which reads the ground is argument

Enough! He loves me. There I let him stand,
And I am sitting!

[Rises, takes a chair, and approaches CLIFFORD.
Pray you take a chair.

[He bows, as acknowledging and declining the honour.
She looks at him awhile.

Clifford, why don't you speak to me? [She weeps.

Clif. I trust
You're happy.

Julia. Happy! Very, very happy!
You see I weep, I am so happy! Tears
Are signs, you know, of nought but happiness!
When first I saw you, little did I look
To be so happy!—Clifford!

Clif. Madam?

Julia. Madam!
I call thee Clifford, and thou call'st me madam!

Clif. Such the address my duty stints me to.
Thou art the wife elect of a proud earl,
Whose humble secretary, now, am I.

Julia. Most right! I had forgot! I thank you, sir,
For so reminding me; and give you joy,
That what, I see, had been a burthen to you,
Is fairly off your hands.

Clif. A burthen to me!
Mean you yourself? Are you that burthen, Julia?
Say that the sun's a burthen to the earth!
Say that the blood's a burthen to the heart!
Say health's a burthen, peace, contentment, joy,
Fame, riches, honours! everything that man
Desires, and gives the name of blessing to!—
E'en such a burthen, Julia were to me,
Had fortune let me wear her.

Julia. [Aside.] On the brink
Of what a precipice I'm standing! Back,
Back! while the faculty remains to do't!
A minute longer, not the whirlpool's self
More sure to suck me down! One effort! There!

[She returns to her seat, recovers her self-possession,
takes up the letter, and reads.

To wed to-morrow night! Wed whom? A man
Whom I can never love! I should before
Have thought of that! To-morrow night! This hour
To-morrow! How I tremble! Happy bands
To which my heart such freezing welcome gives,
As sends an ague through me! At what means
Will not the desperate snatch! What's honour's price?
Nor friends, nor lovers,—no, nor life itself!
Clifford! This moment leave me!

[CLIFFORD retires up the stage out of JULIA's sight.

Is he gone!
O docile lover! Do his mistress' wish

That went against his own! Do it so soon!—
 Ere well 'twas utter'd! No good-bye to her!
 No word! No look! 'Twere best that he so went!
 Alas, the strait of her, who owns that best,
 Which last she'd wish were done? What's left me now?
 To weep!—To weep!

[Leans her head upon her arm, which rests upon the desk,—her other arm hanging listlessly at her side. CLIFFORD comes down the stage, looks a moment at her, approaches her, and kneeling, takes her hand.]

Clif. My Julia!

Julia. Here again!

Up! up! By all thy hopes of Heaven go hence!
 To stay's perdition to me! Look you, Clifford!
 Were there a grave where thou art kneeling now,
 I'd walk into't, and be inearth'd alive,
 Ere taint should touch my name! Should some one come
 And see thee kneeling thus! Let go my hand!
 Remember, Clifford, I'm a promised bride—
 And take thy arm away! It has no right
 To clasp my waist! Judge you so poorly of me,
 As think I'll suffer this? My honour, sir!

[She breaks from him, quitting her seat.]

I'm glad you've forced me to respect myself—
 You'll find that I can do so!

Clif. I was bold—

Forgetful of your station and my own;
 There was a time I held your hand unchid!
 There was a time I might have clasp'd your waist—
 I had forgot that time was past and gone!

I pray you, pardon me!

Julia [softened]. I do so, Clifford.

Clif. I shall no more offend.

Julia. Make sure of that.

No longer is it fit thou keep'st thy post
 In's lordship's household. Give it up! A day—
 An hour remain not in it!

Clif. Wherefore?

Julia. Live

In the same house with me, and I another's?
 Put miles, put leagues between us! The same land
 Should not contain us. Oceans should divide us—
 With barriers of constant tempests—such
 As mariners durst not tempt! O Clifford!
 Rash was the act so light that gave me up,
 That stung a woman's pride, and drove her mad—
 Till in her frenzy she destroy'd her peace!
 Oh, it was rashly done! Had you reprov'd—
 Expostulated,—had you reason'd with me—
 Tried to find out what was indeed my heart,—
 I would have shown it—you'd have seen it. All
 Then would have been as nought can be again!

Clif. Lovest thou me, Julia ?

Julia. Dost thou ask me, Clifford ?

Clif. These nuptials may be shunn'd !—

Julia. With honour ?

Clif. Yes !

Julia. Then take me !—Stop—hear me, and take me then !

Let not thy passion be my counsellor !

Deal with me, Clifford, as my brother. Be

The jealous guardian of my spotless name !

Scan thou my cause as 'twere thy sister's. Let

Thy scrutiny o'erlook no point of it,—

Nor turn it over once, but many a time :—

That flaw, speck,—yea—the shade of one,—a soil

So slight, not one out of a thousand eyes

Could find it out, may not escape thee ; then

Say if these nuptials can be shunn'd with honour !

Clif. They can.

Julia. Then take me, Clifford !

[*They embrace.*]

Wal. [*Entering.*] Ha ! What's this ?

Ha ! treason ! What ! my baronet that was,

My secretary now ? Your servant, sir !

What's here ?—a letter. Fifty crowns to one

A forgery ! I'm wrong. It is his hand.

This proves thee double traitor !

Clif. Traitor !

Julia. Nay,

Control thy wrath, good Master Walter ! Do,—

And I'll persuade him to go hence—[*MASTER WALTER retires up the stage.*] I see

For me thou bearest this, and thank thee, Clifford !

As thou hast truly shown thy heart to me,

So truly I to thee have open'd mine !

Time flies ! To-morrow ! If thy love can find

A way, such as thou said'st, for my enlargement,

By any means thou canst, apprise me of it ;

And, soon as shown, I'll take it.

Wal. Is he gone ?

Julia. He is this moment. If thou covet'st me,

Win me, and wear me ! May I trust thee ? Oh !

If that's thy soul, that's looking through thine eyes,

Thou lovest me, and I may !—I sicken, lest

I never see thee more !

Clif. As life is mine,

The ring that on thy wedding finger goes

No hand but mine shall place there !

Wal. Lingers he ?

Julia. For my sake, now away ! And yet a word.

By all thy hopes most dear, be true to me !

Go now !—yet stay !—Clifford, while you are here,

I'm like a bark distress'd and compassless,

That by a beacon steers ; when you're away,

That bark alone, and tossing miles at sea !

Now go! Farewell! My compass—beacon—land!
When shall my eyes be bless'd with thee again!

Clif. Farewell!

Julia. Art gone! All's chance—All's care—All's darkness! [Goes out.]
[Is led off by MASTER WALTER.]

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in the Earl of Rochdale's.*

Enter HELEN and FATHOM.

Fath. The long and the short of it is this—if she marries this lord, she'll break her heart! I wish you could see her, madam. Poor lady!

Helen. How looks she, prithee?

Fath. Marry, for all the world like a dripping-wet cambric handkerchief! She has no colour nor strength in her; and does nothing but weep—Poor lady!

Helen. Tell me again what said she to thee?

Fath. She offered me all she was mistress of, to take the letter to Master Clifford. She drew her purse from her pocket—the ring from her finger—she took her very ear-rings out of her ears—but I was forbidden, and refused. And now I'm sorry for it! Poor lady!

Helen. Thou *shouldst* be sorry. Thou hast a hard heart, Fathom.

Fath. I, madam! My heart is as soft as a woman's. You should have seen me when I came out of her chamber—Poor lady!

Helen. Did you cry?

Fath. No; but I was as near it as possible. I a hard heart! I would do anything to serve her! Poor sweet lady!

Helen. Will you take her letter, asks she you again?

Fath. No—I am forbid.

Helen. Will you help Master Clifford to an interview with her?

Fath. No—Master Walter would find it out.

Helen. Will you contrive to get me into her chamber?

Fath. No—You would be sure to bring me into mischief.

Helen. Go to! You would do nothing to serve her. You a soft heart! You have no heart at all! You feel not for her!

Fath. But I tell you I do—and good right I have to feel for her. I have been in love myself.

Helen. With your dinner!

Fath. I would it had been! My pain would soon have been over, and at little cost. A fortune I squandered upon her!—trinkets—trimmings—treatings—what swallowed up the

revenue of a whole year! Wasn't I in love? Six months I courted her, and a dozen crowns all but one did I disburse for her in that time! Wasn't I in love? An hostler—a tapster—and a constable, courted her at the same time; and I offered to cudgel the whole three of them for her! Wasn't I in love?

Helen. You are a valiant man, Fathom.

Fath. Am not I? Walks not the earth the man I am afraid of.

Helen. Fear you not Master Walter?

Fath. No.

Helen. You do!

Fath. I don't!

Helen. I'll prove it to you. You see him breaking your young mistress's heart, and have not the manhood to stand by her.

Fath. What could I do for her?

Helen. Let her out of prison. It were the act of a man.

Fath. That man am I!

Helen. Well said, brave Fathom!

Fath. But my place!—

Helen. I'll provide thee with a better one!

Fath. 'Tis a capital place! So little to do, and so much to get for't. Six pounds in the year; two suits of livery; shoes and stockings, and a famous larder! He'd be a bold man that would put such a place in jeopardy. My place, Madam, my place!

Helen. I tell thee I'll provide thee with a better place. Thou shalt have less to do, and more to get. Now, Fathom, hast thou courage to stand by thy mistress?

Fath. I have!

Helen. That's right.

Fath. I'll let my lady out.

Enter MASTER WALTER unperceived.

Helen. That's right. When, Fathom?

Fath. To-night.

Helen. She is to be married to-night.

Fath. This evening then. Master Walter is now in the library, the key is on the outside, and I'll lock him in.

Helen. Excellent! You'll do it?

Fath. Rely upon it. How he'll stare when he finds himself a prisoner, and my young lady at liberty!

Helen. Most excellent! You'll be sure to do it?

Fath. Depend upon me! When Fathom undertakes a thing, he defies fire and water—

Wal. [*Coming forward.*] Fathom!

Fath. Sir!

Wal. Assemble straight the servants.

Fath. Yes, sir!

Wal. Mind,

and have them in the hall when I come down.

Fath. Yes, sir!

Wal. And see you do not stir a step,
But where I order you.

Fath. Not an inch, sir!

Wal. See that you don't—away! So, my fair mistress,
[*FATHOM goes out.*]

What's this you have been plotting? An escape
For mistress Julia?

Helen. I avow it.

Wal. Do you?

Helen. Yes; and moreover to your face I tell you,
Most hardly do you use her!

Wal. Verily!

Helen. I wonder where's her spirit! Had she mine,
She would not take't so easily. Do you mean
To force this marriage on her?

Wal. With your leave.

Helen. You laugh.

Wal. Without it then. I don't laugh now.

Helen. If I were she, I'd find a way to escape.

Wal. What would you do?

Helen. I'd leap out of the window!

Wal. Your window should be barr'd.

Helen. I'd cheat you still!

I'd hang myself ere I'd be forced to marry!

Wal. Well said! You shall be married, then, to-night.

Helen. Married to-night!

Wal. As sure as I have said it.

Helen. Two words to that. Pray who's to be my bride-
groom?

Wal. A daughter's husband is her father's choice.

Helen. My father's daughter ne'er shall wed such husband!

Wal. Indeed!

Helen. I'll pick a husband for myself.

Wal. Indeed!

Helen. Indeed, sir; and indeed again!

Wal. Go dress you for the marriage ceremony.

Helen. But, Master Walter, what is it you mean?

Enter MODUS.

Wal. Here comes your cousin;—he shall be your brides-
man!

The thought's a sudden one,—that will excuse
Defect in your appointments. A plain dress,—
So 'tis of white,—will do.

Helen. I'll dress in black.
I'll quit the castle.

Wal. That you shall not do.
Its doors are guarded by my lord's domestics,
Its avenues—its grounds. What you must do,
Do with a good grace! In an hour, or less,
Your father will be here. Make up your mind

To take with thankfulness the man he gives you.
 Now, [*Aside*] if they find not out how beat their hearts,
 I have no skill, not I, in feeling pulses. [*Goes out.*]

Helen. Why, cousin Modus! What! will you stand by
 And see me forced to marry? Cousin Modus!
 Have you not got a tongue? Have you not eyes?
 Do you not see I'm very—very ill,
 And not a chair in all the corridor?

Mod. I'll find one in the study.

Helen. Hang the study!

Mod. My room's at hand. I'll fetch one thence.

Helen. You shan't!

I'd faint ere you came back!

Mod. What shall I do?

Helen. Why don't you offer to support me? Well?

Give me your arm—be quick! [*MODUS offers his arm.*]
 Is that the way

To help a lady when she's like to faint?

I'll drop unless you catch me! [*MODUS supports her.*]

That will do.

I'm better now—[*MODUS offers to leave her*] don't leave me!

Is one well

Because one's better? Hold my hand. Keep so.

I'll soon recover, so you move not. Loves he— [*Aside.*]

Which I'll be sworn he does, he'll own it now.

Well, cousin Modus?

Mod. Well, sweet cousin!

Helen. Well?

You heard what Master Walter said?

Mod. I did.

Helen. And would you have me marry? Can't you speak?

Say yes or no.

Mod. No, cousin!

Helen. Bravely said!

And why, my gallant cousin?

Mod. Why?

Helen. Ay, why?—

Women, you know, are fond of reasons—Why
 Would you not have me marry? How you blush!
 Is it because you do not know the reason?

You mind me of a story of a cousin

Who once her cousin such a question ask'd—

He had not been to college though—for books,

Had pass'd his time in reading ladies' eyes,

Which he could construe marvellously well,

Though writ in language all symbolical.

Thus stood they once together, on a day—

As we stand now—discours'd as we discourse,—

But with this difference,—fifty gentle words

He spoke to her, for one she spoke to him!—

What a dear cousin! Well, as I was saying,

As now I question'd thee, she question'd him.

And what was his reply? To think of it
 Sets my heart beating—'Twas so kind a one!
 So like a cousin's answer—a dear cousin!
 A gentle, honest, gallant, loving cousin!
 What did he say?—A man might find it out,
 Though never read he Ovid's *Art of Love*—
 What did he say? He'd marry her himself!
 How stupid are you, cousin! Let me go!

Mod. You are not well yet?

Helen. Yes.

Mod. I'm sure you're not!

Helen. I'm sure I am.

Mod. Nay, let me hold you, cousin!

I like it.

Helen. Do you? I would wager you
 You could not tell me why you like it. Well?
 You see how true I know you! How you stare!
 What see you in my face to wonder at?

Mod. A pair of eyes!

Helen. At last he'll find his tongue—
 And saw you ne'er a pair of eyes before?

[*Aside.*

Mod. Not such a pair.

Helen. And why?

Mod. They are so bright!
 You have a Grecian nose.

Helen. Indeed.

Mod. Indeed!

Helen. What kind of mouth have I?

Mod. A handsome one.

I never saw so sweet a pair of lips!

I ne'er saw lips at all till now, dear cousin!

Helen. Cousin, I'm well,—You need not hold me now.

Do you not hear? I tell you I am well!

I need your arm no longer—take't away!

So tight it locks me, 'tis with pain I breathe!

Let me go, cousin! Wherefore do you hold

Your face so close to mine? What do you mean?

Mod. You've question'd me, and now I'll question you.

Helen. What would you learn?

Mod. The use of lips.

Helen. To speak.

Mod. Nought else?

Helen. How bold my modest cousin grows!
 Why, other use know you?

Mod. I do!

Helen. Indeed!

You're wondrous wise? And pray what is it?

Mod. This! [*Attempts to kiss her.*

Helen. Soft! my hand thanks you, cousin—for my lips
 I keep them for a husband!—Nay, stand off!

I'll not be held in manacles again!

Why do you follow me?

Mod. I love you, cousin !

'Tis out at last.

[*Aside.*

Helen. You love me ! Love me, cousin !
O cousin, mean you so ! That's passing strange !
Falls out most crossly—is a dire mishap—
A thing to sigh for, weep for, languish for,
And die for !

Mod. Die for !

Helen. Yes, with laughter, cousin,
For, cousin, I love you !

Mod. And you'll be mine ?

Helen. I will.

Mod. Your hand upon it.

Helen. Hand and heart.

Hie to thy dressing-room, and I'll to mine—

Attire thee for the altar—so will I.

Whoe'er may claim me, thou'rt the man shall have me.

Away ! Despatch ! But hark you, ere you go,

Ne'er brag of reading Ovid's Art of Love !

Mod. And cousin ! stop—One little word with you !

[*She returns, he snatches a kiss.—They go out severally.*

SCENE II.—*Julia's Chamber.*

Enter JULIA.

Julia. No word from him, and evening now set in !

He cannot play me false ! His messenger

Is dogg'd—or letter intercepted. I'm

Beset with spies !—No rescue !—No escape !—

The hour at hand that brings my bridegroom here !

No relative to aid me ! friend to counsel me.

[*A knock at the door.*

* Come in.

Enter two Female Attendants.

Your will ?

First Attendant. Your toilet waits, my lady ;

'Tis time you dress.

Julia. 'Tis time I die ! [*A peal of bells.*] What's that ?

First Attendant. Your wedding bells, my lady.

Julia. Merrily

They ring my knell ! [*Second Attendant presents an open case.*

And pray you what are these ?

Second Attendant. Your wedding jewels.

Julia. Set them by.

Second Attendant. Indeed

Was ne'er a braver set ! A necklace, brooch,

* In the acting, what follows is omitted, until the line—"He that should guard me," &c.

And ear-rings all of brilliants, with a hoop
To guard your wedding ring.

Julia. 'Twould need a guard
That lacks a heart to keep it!

Second Attendant. Here's a heart
Suspended from the necklace—one huge diamond
Imbedded in a host of smaller ones!
Oh! how it sparkles!

Julia. Show it me! Bright heart,
Thy lustre, should I wear thee, will be false,—
For thou the emblem art of love and truth,—
From her that wears thee unto him that gives thee.
Back to thy case! Better thou ne'er shouldst leave it—
Better thy gems a thousand fathoms deep
In their native mine again, than grace my neck,
And lend thy fair face to palm off a lie!

First Attendant. Wilt please you dress?

Julia. Ah! in infected clothes
New from a pest-house! Leave me! If I dress,
I dress alone! O for a friend! Time gallops!

[Attendants go out.]

He that should guard me is mine enemy!
Constrains me to abide the fatal die,
My rashness, not my reason cast! He comes,
That will exact the forfeit!—Must I pay it?—
E'en at the cost of utter bankruptcy!
What's to be done? Pronounce the vow that parts
My body from my soul! To what it loathes
Links that, while this is link'd to what it loves!
Condemn'd to such perdition! What's to be done?
Stand at the altar in an hour from this!
An hour thence seated at his board—a wife
Thence!—frenzy's in the thought! What's to be done?

Enter MASTER WALTER.

Wal. What! run the waves so high? Not ready yet!
Your lord will soon be here! The guests collect.

Julia. Show me some way to 'scape these nuptials! Do it!
Some opening for avoidance or escape,—
Or to thy charge I'll lay a broken heart!
It may be, broken vows, and blasted honour!
Or else a mind distraught!

Wal. What's this?

Julia. The strait
I'm fallen into my patience cannot bear!
It frights my reason—warps my sense of virtue!
Religion!—changes me into a thing,
I look at with abhorring!

Wal. Listen to me.

Julia. Listen to me, and heed me! If this contract
Thou hold'st me to—abide thou the result!
Answer to heaven for what I suffer!—act!

Prepare thyself for such calamity
 To fall on me, and those whose evil stars
 Have link'd them with me, as no past mishap,
 However rare, and marvellously sad,
 Can parallel! lay thy account to live
 A smileless life, die an unpitied death—
 Abhorr'd, abandon'd of thy kind,—as one
 Who had the guarding of a young maid's peace,—
 Look'd on and saw her rashly peril it;
 And when she saw her danger, and confess'd
 Her fault, compell'd her to complete her ruin!

Wal. Hast done?

Julia. Another moment, and I have.
 Be warn'd! Beware how you abandon me
 To myself! I'm young, rash, inexperienced! tempted
 By most insufferable misery!
 Bold, desperate, and reckless! Thou hast age,
 Experience, wisdom, and collectedness,—
 Power, freedom,—everything that I have not,
 Yet want, as none e'er wanted! Thou canst save me,
 Thou ought'st! thou must! I tell thee at his feet
 I'll fall a corse—ere mount his bridal bed!
 So choose betwixt my rescue and my grave;—
 And quickly too! The hour of sacrifice
 Is near! Anon the immolating priest
 Will summon me! Devise some speedy means
 To cheat the altar of its victim. Do it!
 Nor leave the task to me!

Wal. Hast done?

Julia. I have.

Wal. Then list to me—and silently, if not
 With patience.— [*Brings chairs for himself and her.*]
 How I watch'd thee from thy childhood,
 I'll not recall to thee. Thy father's wisdom—
 Whose humble instrument I was—directed
 Your nonage should be pass'd in privacy,
 From your apt mind that far outstripp'd your years,
 Fearing the taint of an infected world;—
 For, in the rich ground, weeds once taking root,
 Grow strong as flowers—He might be right or wrong!
 I thought him right; and therefore did his bidding.
 Most certainly he loved you—so did I;
 Ay! well as I had been myself your father!

[*His hand is resting upon his knee, JULIA attempts to
 take it—he withdraws it—looks at her—she hangs
 her head.*]

Well; you may take my hand! I need not say
 How fast you grew in knowledge, and in goodness,—
 That hope could scarce enjoy its golden dreams
 So soon fulfilment realized them all!
 Enough. You came to womanhood. Your heart,
 Pure as the leaf of the consummate bud,

That's new unfolded by the smiling sun,
 And ne'er knew blight nor canker! When a good woman
 Is fitly mated, she grows doubly good,
 How good soe'er before! I found the man
 I thought a match for thee; and, soon as found,
 Proposed him to thee—'Twas your father's will,
 Occasion offering, you should be married
 Soon as you reach'd to womanhood.—You liked
 My choice—accepted him.—We came to town;
 Where, by important matter summon'd thence,
 I left you an affianced bride!

Julia. You did!

You did!

Wal. Nay, check thy tears! Let judgment now,
 Not passion, be awake. On my return,
 I found thee—what?—I'll not describe the thing
 I found thee then! I'll not describe my pangs
 To see thee such a thing! The engineer
 Who lays the last stone of his sea-built tower,
 It cost him years and years of toil to raise,—
 And, smiling at it, tells the winds and waves
 To roar and whistle now—but, in a night,
 Beholds the tempest sporting in its place—
 May look aghast, as I did!

Julia. [*Falling on her knees.*] Pardon me!
 Forgive me! pity me!

Wal. Resume thy seat.

[*Raises her.*]

I pity thee; perhaps not thee alone
 It fits to sue for pardon.

Julia. Me alone!

None other! None!—O, none! But, Master Walter!
 These nuptials!—must they needs go on?

Servant. [*Entering.*] More guests
 Arrive.

Wal. Attend to them.

[*Servant goes out.*]

Julia. Dear Master Walter!

Is there no way to escape these nuptials?

Wal. Know'st not

What with these nuptials comes? Hast thou forgot?

Julia. What?

Wal. Nothing!—I did tell thee of a thing—

Julia. What was it?

Wal. To forget it was a fault!

Look back and think.

Julia. I can't remember it.

Wal. Fathers, make straws your children! Nature's
 nothing!

Blood nothing! Once in other veins it runs,
 It no more yearneth for the parent flood,
 Than doth the stream that from the source disparts.
 Talk not of love instinctive—What you call so
 Is but the brat of custom! Your own flesh

By habit cleaves to you—without,
Hath no adhesion! [*Aside.*] So; you have forgot
You have a father, and are here to meet him!

Julia. I'll not deny it.

Wal. You should blush for't.

Julia. No!

Nay, hear me, Master Walter! Nay, turn not from me!

For thou to me, except a father's name,

Hast all the father been: the care—the love—

The guidance—the protection of a father.

Canst wonder, then, if like thy child I feel,—

And feeling so, that father's claim forget

Whom ne'er I knew, save by the name of one?

Oh, turn to me, and do not chide me! or

If thou wilt chide, chide on! but turn to me!

Wal. [*Struggling with emotion.*] My Julia! [*Embraces her.*]

Julia. Now, dear Master Walter, hear me!

Is there no way to 'scape these nuptials?

Wal. Julia,

A promise made admits not of release,

Save by consent or forfeiture of those

Who hold it—so it should be ponder'd well

Before we let it go. Ere man should say

I broke the word I had the power to keep,

I'd lose the life I had the power to part with!

Remember, Julia, thou and I, to-day,

Must, to thy father, of thy training render

A strict account. While honour's left to us,

We have something—nothing, having all, but that.

Now for thy last act of obedience, Julia!

Present thyself before thy bridegroom! [*She assents.*] Good!

My Julia's now herself! Show him thy heart,

And to his honour leave't to set thee free

Or hold thee bound. Thy father will be by!

He comes!—Be firm!—Thy father will be by!

*Enter LORD ROCHDALE with LORD TINSEL and friends—
afterwards CLIFFORD.*

Roch. Is she not fair?

Tin. I scarce have seen her yet.

She'll do. Your servant, lady! Master Walter,

We're glad to see you. Sirs, you're welcome all.

What wait they for? Are we to wed or not?

We're ready—Why don't they present the bride?

I hope they know she is to wed an earl.

Roch. Should I speak first?

Tin. Not for your coronet!

I, as your friend, may make the first advance.

We've come here to be married. Where's the bride?

Wal. There stands she, lord. If 'tis her will to wed,

His lordship's free to take her.

Tin. Not a step!

I, as your friend, may lead her to your lordship.
Fair lady, by your leave.

Julia. No! not to you.

Tin. I ask your hand to give it to his lordship.

Julia. Nor to his lordship—save he will accept
My hand without my heart!

Tin. What means the girl!

Julia. What is't behoves a wife to bring her lord?

Wal. A whole heart, and a true one.

Julia. I have none!

Not half a heart—the fraction of a heart!

Am I a woman it befits to wed?

Wal. Why, where's thy heart?

Julia. Gone!—Out of my keeping!—

Lost, past recovery! Right and title to it—

And all given up! and he that's owner on't,

So fit to wear it, were it fifty hearts,

I'd give it to him all!

Wal. Thou dost not mean

His lordship's secretary?

Julia. Yes. Away

Disguises! In that secretary know

The master of the heart, of which, the poor,

Unvalued, empty casket, at your feet,—

Its jewel gone,—I now despairing throw! [*Kneels to WALTER.*]

Wal. Rise! Rise, my Julia!—Think!—You have a father.

Tin. Lady, we came not here to treat of hearts,—

But marriage; which, so please you, is with us

A simple joining, by the priest, of hands.

A ring's put on; a prayer or two is said;

You're man and wife,—and nothing more! For hearts,

We oft'ner do without, than with them, lady!

Clif. So does not wed this lady!

Tin. Who are you?

Clif. The secretary to the Earl of Rochdale.

Tin. My lord!

Roch. I know him not—

Tin. I know him now—

Your lordship's rival! once Sir Thomas Clifford.

Clif. Yes, and the bridegroom of that lady then,

Then loved her—loves her still!

Julia. Was loved by her—

Though then she knew it not!—is loved by her,

As now she knows, and all the world may know!

Tin. We can't be laugh'd at. We are here to wed,
And shall fulfil our contract.

Julia. Clifford!

Clif. Julia!

You will not give your hand?

[*A pause—JULIA seems utterly lost.*]

Wal. You have forgot

Again. You have a father!

Julia. Bring him now,—

To see thy Julia justify thy training,
And lay her life down to redeem her word!

Wal. And so redeems her all!—Is it your will,
My lord, these nuptials should go on?

Roch. It is.

Wal. Then is it mine they stop!

Tin. I told your lordship

You should not keep a Hunchback for your agent.

Wal. Thought like my father, my good lord, who said
He would not have a Hunchback for his son,—
So do I pardon you the savage slight!
My lord, that I am not as straight as you,
Was blemish neither of my thought nor will,
My head nor heart. It was no act of mine,—
Yet did it curdle nature's kindly milk
E'en where 'tis richest—in a parent's breast—
To cast me out to heartless fosterage.
And give my portion to another! So!
But all's recover'd.

Look, my lord, a testament
To make a pension of his lordship's rent-roll!
It is my father's, and was left by him,
In case his heir should die without a son,
Then to be open'd. Heaven did send a son
To bless the heir. Heaven took its gift away.
He died—His father died. And Master Walter—
The unsightly agent of his lordship there—
The Hunchback whom your lordship would have stripp'd
Of his agency,—is now the Earl of Rochdale!

Julia. The Earl of Rochdale!

Wal. Ay! The Earl of Rochdale.

But what of that? Thou know'st not half my greatness!
A prouder title, Julia, have I yet.

Sooner than part with which I'd give that up,

And be again plain Master Walter. What!

Dost thou not apprehend me? Yes, thou dost!

Command thyself—Don't gasp! My pupil—daughter!

Come to thy father's heart! [*JULIA rushes into his arms.*]

Enter FATHOM.

Fath. Thievery! Elopement—escape—arrest!

Wal. What's the matter?

Fath. Mistress Helen is running away with Master Modus
—Master Modus is running away with Mistress Helen—but
we have caught them, secured them, and here they come, to
receive the reward of their merits.

Enter HELEN and MODUS, followed by Servants.

Helen. I'll ne'er wed man, if not my cousin Modus.

Mod. Nor woman I, save cousin Helen's she.

Wal. A daughter and a nephew has my friend,

Without their match in duty ! You shall marry.
For you, sir, who to-day have lost an earldom,
Yet would have shared that earldom with my child—
My only one—content yourself with prospect
Of the succession—it must fall to you,
And fit yourself to grace it. Ape not those
Who rank by pride. The man of simplest bearing
Is yet a lord, when he's a lord indeed !
Sir Thomas Clifford, take my daughter's hand !—
If now you know the master of her heart !
Give it, my Julia ! You suspect, I see,
And rightly, there has been some masking here.
Content thee, daughter, thou shalt know anon,
How jealousy of my mis-shapen back
Made me mistrustful of a child's affections—
Who doubted e'en a wife's—so that I dropp'd
The title of thy father, lest thy duty
Should pay the debt thy love alone could solve.
All this and more, that to thy friends and thee
Pertains, at fitting time thou shalt be told.
But now thy nuptials wait—the happy close
Of thy hard trial—wholesome, though severe !
The world won't cheat thee now—thy heart is proved ;—
Thou know'st thy peace by finding out its bane,
And ne'er wilt act from heedless impulse more !

END OF THE HUNCHBACK.



Figure 1

THE WIFE:

A Tale of Mantua.

DEDICATED
TO CAPTAIN THOMAS BLAIR

(OF THE HON. COMPANY'S SHIP WILLIAM FAIRLIE).

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

(AS ORIGINALLY PERFORMED AT COVENT GARDEN, IN 1833.)

<i>Mariana</i>	Miss ELLEN TREE.
<i>Floribel</i>	Miss SYDNEY.
<i>Leonardo Gonzaga</i> } Princes of {	Mr. C. KEAN.
<i>Ferrardo Gonzaga</i> } Mantua {	Mr. WARDE.
<i>Count Florio</i>	Mr. DIDDEAR.
<i>Jubian St. Pierre</i>	Mr. SHERIDAN KNOWLES.
<i>Antonio</i> , a Curate	Mr. G. BENNETT.
<i>Lorenzo</i> , an Advocate of Rome ..	Mr. ABBOTT.
<i>Hugo</i> , Guardian to Mariana	Mr. RANSFORD.
<i>Bartolo</i>	Mr. MEADOWS.
<i>Bernardo</i>	Mr. TURNOUR.
<i>Carlo</i>	Mr. BARNES.
<i>Marco</i>	Mr. HENRY.
<i>Pietro</i>	Mr. PAYNE.
<i>Stephano</i>	Mr. J. COOPER.
<i>First Lord</i>	Mr. IRWIN.
<i>Advocate of Mantua</i>	Mr. HAINES.
<i>First Officer</i>	Mr. T. MATTHEWS.
<i>Second Officer</i>	Mr. MEARS.
<i>Courier</i>	Mr. HEATH.

SCENE—MANTUA;—AFTERWARDS THE CAMP.

PROLOGUE,

SPOKEN BY MR. WARDE.

UNTOWARD fate no luckless wight invades
More sorely than the Man who drives *two trades*;
Like Esop's bat, between two natures placed,
Scowl'd at by *mice*, among the *birds* disgraced.
Our author thus, of twofold fame exactor,
Is doubly scouted,—both as Bard and Actor!
Wanting in haste a Prologue, he applied
To three poetic friends; was thrice denied.
Each glared on him with supercilious glance,
As on a Poor Relation met by chance;
And one was heard, with more repulsive air,
To mutter "Vagabond," "Rogue," "Strolling Player!"
A poet once, he found—and look'd aghast—
By turning actor, he had lost his *caste*.
The verse patch'd up at length—with like ill fortune
His friends behind the scenes he did importune
To speak his lines. He found them all fight shy,
Nodding their heads in cool civility.

"Their service in the Drama was enough,
The poet might recite the poet's stuff!"
The rogues—they like him hugely—but it stung 'em,
Somehow—to think a Bard had got among 'em.
Their mind made up—no earthly pleading shook it,
In pure compassion till I undertook it.
Disown'd by Poets and by Actors too,
Dear Patrons of both arts, he turns to you!
If in your hearts some tender feelings dwell
From sweet VIRGINIA, or heroic TELL:
If in the scenes which follow you can trace
What once has pleased you—an unbidden grace—
A touch of nature's work—an awkward start
Or ebullition of an Irish heart—
Cry, clap, commend it! If you like them not,
Your former favours cannot be forgot.
Condemn them—damn them—hiss them if you will—
Their author is your grateful servant still!

THE WIFE:

A TALE OF MANTUA.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Street in Mantua.*

Enter LEONARDO GONZAGA *and* LORENZO.

Leon. So in my native city, thanks to Heaven,
Ten years and more elapsed, I stand again!
A boy it sent me forth, takes back a man.
Hail to it! 'Tis mine old acquaintance still,
In nothing strange—unalter'd! To a stone
The same I left it! Glad am I to see it—
None better loves its venerable face!

Lor. I'm glad to see you smile.

Leon. I do so, signor.

I am a boy again! The days come back
When smallest things made wealth of happiness
And ever were at hand! when I did watch
With panting heart the striking of the clock,
Which hardly sounded ere the book was shut.
Then for the race—the leap—the game—O, signor,
The vigour and endurance of such joy!
Is't e'er to come again?—and care so light,
That, looking back, I smile that thought it care,
And call it part of pleasure! I'm again
In Mantua!

Lor. Then here we say farewell.

Leon. Not so! Acquaintance, born and nurtured in
Adversity, is worth the cherishing!
'Tis proved steel which one may trust one's life to.
You are a stranger here in Mantua.
Which I am native to. What brings you hither?
If 'tis a cause no scruple of just weight
Forbids thee to unfold, unbosom thee;
And, in return for what thou part'st with, take
The zeal and honour of a hearty friend,
And service too, to boot!—You pause from doubt
Either of my ability or faith.
If this, I'm sorry for't—If that, take heed!

You know not by the eye the practised limb
 Where the inform'd and active sinew lies,
 That's equal to the feat. What, silent still ?
 'Sdeath, man ! a dwarf is not to be despised,
 For he may have a giant for his friend,
 And so be master of a giant's strength !
 Come, come, have confidence !—'Tis the free rein
 Which takes the willing courser o'er the leap
 He'd miss, suppose you check'd him !

Lor. There are men
 Whose habits in abeyance hold their natures,
 Which still remain themselves.—Your temperament
 Is of the sanguine kind, and so is mine ;
 But lo, the difference ! Thy frankness brooks
 No pause—thy wish is scarce conceived, ere told—
 As if men's hearts were open as their looks,
 And trust were due to all ! The law hath been
 My study, signor ; and, these three years past,
 My practice too ; and it hath taught me this :—
 To doubt, with openness to be convinced,
 Is to remain on this side danger, yet
 No fraction lack of generosity,
 Which it becomes a noble mind to cherish.

Leon. And doubt you me ?

Lor. No, signor ; but drew back,
 When you, with instant promptness, made advance,
 Where I, with all the heart to take the step,
 Had still, I fear, been standing ! You shall know
 My errand hither. I am nephew—

Leon. Stop
 Till these pass on !

Enter BARTOLO, CARLO, BERNARDO, and others.

Carlo. Will not the duke postpone the cause ?

Bar. I tell thee no.

Carlo. And wherefore ?

Bar. What's that to thee ?—Is not he the duke ? Shall
 such a piece of flesh and bone as thou art, question the duke ?

Carlo. Why not ?

Bar. Why not ? Would any one believe he had been born
 in Mantua ? Now mark how I shall answer him ! Dost thou
 drink Burgundy ?

Carlo. No, but water.

Bar. Then art thou, compared to the great duke, what
 water is to Burgundy.

Carlo. He is but flesh and blood.

Bar. But what kind of flesh and blood ? Answer me that !
 Wouldst thou, that dinest upon garlic and coarse bread, and
 wastest them down with water, compare thyself to one who
 sits down, every day of the week, to a table of three courses ?
 Thou art no more than a head of garlic to the duke !

Ber. Say on, Bartolo! Well! The duke refuses to postpone the cause; and what then?

Bar. Why then the case must come on.

Ber. And what will be the end on't?

Bar. That knows the duke.

Carlo. But what *ought* it to be?

Bar. What the great duke wills.

Carlo. Why so?

Bar. Because that must be.

Ber. She was a bold girl, when they forced her to the church, to refuse to give her hand there, and claim the protection of the curate.

Bar. He was a bolder man to have anything to say to so mettlesome a piece of stuff.

Carlo. And to refuse a count!

Bar. Her cause will not thrive the better for that; unless, indeed, the duke be wroth with the count, for honourably affecting a commissary's ward.

Leon. [*Aside.*] You seem intent on their discourse?

Lor. [*Aside.*] I am so.

Ber. You saw her, Bartolo, did you not?

Bar. Yes, I was passing by, when they were forcing her into the church, and followed them in.

Carlo. Is she as handsome as they say?

Bar. Humph!—handsome?—Handsome is this, and handsome is that. I could sooner tell the absence of beauty than the presence of it. Now thou art not beautiful; but dress thee like a duke, and it might change thee. Thou that art an ugly craftsman, might become a beautiful duke. Notwithstanding I think I dare pronounce her handsome—very handsome! nay, I will go further, and confess that, were she a countess, or duchess, I would call her the most beautiful woman in Mantua.

Ber. But why wishes the curate to have the cause postponed?

Bar. To wait for a learned doctor of the law, for whom he has sent to Rome, but who has not yet arrived, though hourly looked for.

Carlo. What! must one send for law to Rome?

Bar. Yes, if one cannot find it in Mantua.

Carlo. Cannot one find law in Mantua?

Bar. Not if it be all bought up. There's not a legal man of note whom the count has not retained; so was the curate forced to send for his nephew to Rome—a man, it is reported, of great learning, and of profound skill in his profession, though hardly yet out of his nonage.

Leon. [*Aside.*] You colour, signor! 'Tis of you he speaks?

Carlo. Fears he to come to Mantua, or what?

Bar. 'Tis thought the brigands have detained him—a plague upon the rascals! A word in your ears, signors. You all know that Bartolo is a loyal man?

All. We do, Bartolo.

Bar. Said I ever a word against the duke?

All. No.

Bar. You are right, signors; nor would I, though the duke were to hang every honest man in Mantua; for is he not the duke?—and is not Bartolo a loyal man! Now if I speak of the duke's cousin, whom the brigands, they say, have killed, speak I against the duke?

All. No!

Bar. Is't treason to say "a pity that he was killed?"

All. No!

Bar. Ah, signors, had he succeeded his father, he would have made a proper duke. Is this saying anything against his cousin that is the duke?

All. No!

Bar. I warrant me, no! Catch Bartolo talking treason! Who says a word against the duke? he dies, as Bartolo is a loyal man! But fare you well, signors. The trial comes on at noon—and noon will soon be here.

Ber. We go your way.

Bar. Come on, then. Remember I said not a word against the duke. [BARTOLO and others go out.]

Leon. Of you he spoke—was it not so?

Lor. It was.

Leon. You come to Mantua to plead the cause Of this fair damsel. You were here before, But that the brigands intercepted you,— Your hurt, but my advantage, whose escape, Long time their captive, you contrived. And now, To prove my friendship more than wordy vaunting— I have the power to serve you. Take me with you. Your clerk, you said, opposing vain resistance, The hot-brain'd robber slew. Suppose me him. I have a smattering of his vocation, A notion of the mystery of yours; And I would hear, by their own lips recited, This worthy priest and beauteous damsel's cause, For reasons which—you smile?

Lor. A thought just cross'd me.

Leon. I know thy thought—"Tis wrong!—"Tis not the heat Of youthful blood which prompts—You smile again?

Lor. Your pardon.—If I did, you have to thank The quickness of your apprehension.

Leon. Mark me!—

I have loved my last—and that love was my first! A passion like a seedling that did spring, Whose germ the winds had set; of stem so fine, And leaf so small, to inexperienced sight It pass'd for nought,—until, with swelling trunk, And spreading branches, bowing all around, It stood a goodly tree! Are you content? This was my sadness, signor, which the sight Of my dear native city briefly banish'd!

Which thy misgiving hath brought back again ;
And which will be the clothing of my heart,
While my heart calls this breast of mine its house.

Lor. I pray you, pardon me !

Leon. I pray you, peace !

Time presses.—Once again, have confidence,
And take me with you to your uncle's home.
More than you credit me, I may bestead you.
Wilt take my hand ?

Lor. I will !

Leon. Have with you, then !

[*They go out.*]

SCENE II.—*Antonio's House.*

Enter ANTONIO and PIETRO.

Ant. What lacks it now of noon ?

Piet. An hour or more.

Ant. No chance of his arrival !—This delay
Perplexes me ! Is it neglect ?—I thought
His answer would have been his presence here,
Prompt as my summons ; yet he neither comes
Nor sends excuse. 'Tis very strange ! She holds
The same sedate, collected carriage still ?

Piet. She does, and native seems it to the maid
As her fair brow, wherefrom it calmly looks,
As from its custom'd and assur'd seat—
A gentleness that smiles without a smile—
For 'tis the sweetness, not of cheek, or lip
Alone ; but every feature—every act—
Delights the heart that's near her. Silence is
Her favourite mood, yet ne'er repels she converse,
While every theme hath one unvaried close—
A blessing on your reverence.

Ant. Poor-girl !

She owes me nought. Why do I serve my Master,
If not to do his bidding ? Is it but
To hold the crook ? Nay, but to use the crook !
To be, indeed, the shepherd of the flock—
Wakeful and watchful—pitiful and faithful—
My charitable life, and not my title,
The badge and warrant of my sacred calling !
She was afflicted, persecuted, and
I succour'd her !—I, standing at the altar !
Beneath my Master's roof ! His livery,
Blazon'd, as ne'er was earthly king's, upon me !
What could I less ?

Piet. Fails he to come, for whom
Your reverence looks, to plead the damsel's cause ;
Must it perforce go on ?

Ant. It must ; and I

Myself will be her advocate, before
 The haughty duke ! For problems of deep law,
 Will give him axioms of plain truth ; and paint
 Her thrilling grievance—to the life ; with tears,
 Which, Pity seeing, shall to every heart
 That owns its influence, her cause commend,
 And gather tears to aid them !

Enter STEPHANO.

Ste. May it please you,
 Two strangers, craving audience, wait below.

Ant. Admit them ! 'Tis my nephew ! Worthy Pietro,
 Have all in readiness, that we appear
 Before the duke when cited. [PIETRO goes out.]

Enter LEONARDO GONZAGA and LORENZO.

So, Lorenzo !

Lor. Save you, my reverend uncle !

Ant. Now a week

I've look'd for you—but waive we explanations.
 Thou'rt come !—and to the business that has brought thee :—
 I have possess'd thee of the damsel's cause
 In all its bearings—Art prepared to plead it ?

Lor. I am, so please your reverence ;—but, with us,
 That evidence is best which is direct.
 That the Count Florio seeks the damsel's hand,—
 That wills her guardian she bestow it on him,—
 That she resists her uncle and the count,—
 I know ; but not the cause of her dissent.
 Children to guardians should obedience pay ;
 A match, so lofty, warrants some enforcement,
 Which, not on slight grounds, should the maid resist.

Ant. Ground know I none, save strong aversion.

Lor. Pray you

Vouchsafe us conference with the maid herself.

Her deposition shall this gentleman

That's come with me—my trusty clerk—set down.

Ant. I'll bring her to you ;—but, I charge you, boy,
 You keep in mind you are her advocate ;
 For she, indeed, of those rare things of earth,
 Which of the debt that's due to it, rob Heaven,
 That men set earth before it, is the rarest !
 Then guard thee, nephew !—rather with thine ears
 And tongue discourse with her, than with thine eyes,
 Lest thou forget it was her cause, not she,
 That summon'd thee to Mantua !

Lor. Fear me not !

[ANTONIO goes out.]

Leon. A service of some danger, it should seem,
 Your reverend uncle has engaged you in ;
 And, by his pardon, for your safety, uses
 Means which your peril more enhance than lessen.

The soldier that is taught to fear his foe,
Is half o'ercome before he takes the field.

Lor. Is't from your own misgivings you doubt me!

Leon. No!—As I said before, my heart is safe—
Love-proof, with love!—which, if it be not, signor,
A passion that can only once be felt—
Hath but one object—lives and dies with us—
And, while it lives, remains itself, while all
Attachments else keep changing—it is nothing!
I used to laugh at love, and deem it fancy.
My heart would choose its mistress by mine eyes;
Whom scarce they found before I sought a new one.
I wooed not then the beauty of the soul—
The passing loveliness which lodgeth there—
A world beyond the charm of face or form!
I found it! When or where—for weal or woe—
It matters not! I found it!—wedded it!
Never to be divorced from that true love
Which taught me love, indeed!

Lor. You wedded it?—

Then was your passion blest?

Leon. No, Signor, no!

Question no further, prithee! Here's your uncle!

Enter ANTONIO and MARIANA.

Ant. Lo, nephew! here's the maid,
To answer for herself!

Lor. [*To LEONARDO.*] She's fair, indeed!
Description ne'er could give her out the thing,
One only glance avows her!—Prithee, look!

Leon. Show her to him who has not seen the fairest!
Remember, signor, Time's no gazer, but
A traveller, whose eye is on his road,
And feet in motion, ever! Noon's at hand!

Lor. I thank you. Note my questions—her replies.
Your guardian—Is he your relation too?

Mari. No.—Would he were! That stay had needs be strong,
Which failing, we've none other left, to cling to.

Leon. Oh, music!—

Lor. What's the matter?

Leon. 'Twas a bird!—

Whose throat, for sweetness, beggars all the grove!
Yea, of its rich and famed minstrel makes
A poor and common chorister!

Lor. Hear her!

You'll have no ear for any other bird:
Look at her, and you'll have no ear for her,
Your tranced vision every other sense
Absorbing!—Gave you promise to the count?

Mari. None!

Lor. Nor encouragement?

Mari. Such as aversion
Gives to the thing it loathes!

Lor. Have you a vow
Or promise to another?—That were a plea
To justify rejection. You are silent.
And yet you speak—if blushes speak—and all
Confess they do. Come, come, I know you love!
Tell me, I pray, the story of your love!
That, thereon, I may found my proper plea
To show your opposition not a thing
Of fantasy, caprice, or frowardness;
But such as all men should commend you for.
Prove it the joint result of heart and reason,
Each other's act approving. Was't in Mantua
You met?

Mari. No, signor, in my native land!

Lor. And that is——

Mari. Switzerland!

Lor. His country too?

Mari. No, signor, he belong'd to Mantua.

Lor. That's right!—You are collected and direct
In your replies. I dare be sworn your passion
Was such a thing, as by its neighbourhood
Made even piety and virtue richer
Than e'er they were before. How grew it? Come,
Thou know'st thy heart! Look calmly into it,
And see how innocent a thing it is
Thou fear'st so much to show.—I wait your answer.
How grew your passion?

Mari. As my stature grew,
Which rose without my noting it, until
They said I was a woman. I kept watch
Beside what seem'd his death-bed. From beneath
An avalanche my father rescued him,
The sole survivor of a company
Who wander'd through our mountains. A long time
His life was doubtful, signor, and he call'd
For help, whence help alone could come, which I,
Morning and night, invoked along with him.—
Thus 'gan our souls to mingle!

Lor. I perceive.
You mingled souls until you mingled hearts?
You loved at last.—Was't not the sequel, maid?

Mari. I loved indeed! If I but nursed a flower
Which, to the ground, the rain and wind had beaten,
That flower of all our garden was my pride!
What then was he to me, for whom I thought
To make a shroud; when, tending on him, still,
With hope, that, baffled still, still lost not heart,
I saw at last the ruddy dawn of health
Begin to mantle o'er his pallid form,

And glow—and glow—till forth at last it burst
 Into confirméd, broad, and glorious day!

Lor. You loved, and were beloved?

Mari. To say I was,
 Were to affirm what oft his eyes avouch'd,
 What many an action testified—and yet—
 What wanted confirmation of his tongue.
 But if he loved—it brought him not content!
 'Twas now abstraction—now a start—anon
 A pacing to and fro—anon, a stillness,
 As nought remain'd of life, save life itself,
 And feeling, thought, and motion, were extinct!
 Then all again was action!—disinclined
 To converse, save he held it with himself;
 Which oft he did, in gloomy mood discoursing,
 And ever and anon invoking Honour—
 As some high contest there were pending, 'twixt
 Himself and him, wherein her aid he needed.

Lor. This spoke impediment! Or he was bound,
 By promise, to another; or had friends
 Whom it behoved him to consult, and doubted;
 Or 'twixt you lay disparity, too wide
 For love itself to leap.

Mari. I saw a struggle,
 But knew not what it was!—I wonder'd, still,
 That what to me was all content, to him
 Was all disturbance; but my turn arrived.
 At length he talk'd of leaving us! At length,
 He fix'd the parting day!—but kept it not—
 How my heart bounded!—then I knew how low
 It had been sinking. Deeper still it sank
 When next he fix'd the day to go; and, then,
 It sank, to bound no more! He went, indeed!

Lor. To follow him, you came to Mantua?

Mari. What could I do but follow him, with whom
 My heart had gone; and, with it, everything—
 Cot, garden, vineyard, rivulet, and wood,
 Lake, sky, and mountain—e'en my father, signor,—
 Could I remain behind? That father found
 His child was not at home; he loved me, signor,
 And ask'd me, one day, whither we should go?
 I said, "To Mantua." I follow'd him
 To Mantua!—to breathe the air he breathed,
 To walk upon the ground he walk'd upon,
 To look upon the things he look'd upon,
 To look, perchance, on him! perchance to hear him,
 To touch him!—never to be known to him,
 Till he was told, perhaps, I died, his love.

Lor. I pray you, signor, how do you get on?
 I see you play the woman well as I!
 And, sooth to say, the eye were stone itself,

From which her story could not call a tear !
 How get you on ? indite you word for word
 As she delivers it ? How's this !—The page
 As blank as first you found it !—All our pains
 Have gone to lose our time !

Leon. I have a gift

Of memory, signor, which belongs to few.
 What once I hear, stands as a written page
 Before me ; which, if question'd, I could read
 Letter for letter.—You shall have anon
 The proof of this. I have a friend or two
 I fain would snatch a word with—That despatch'd,
 I'll meet you at the duke's, and bring with me
 The damsel's story, word for word set down,
 And win your full content ; or give you leave
 To brand me an impostor, or aught else
 A man should blush to pass for ! Will you trust me ?

Lor. I will.

Leon. You may, for you shall ne'er repent you.
 I'll bring you aid you little count upon. [*Aside.*] [*Goes out.*]

Ant. Nay, nephew, urge your friend to stay. A space
 You have for brief refreshment ; and, in sooth,
 You want it, who, from travel just alighted,
 Must needs to business go.

Lor. Detain not him !

Some needful avocations call him hence.
 I wait your pleasure, uncle.

Ant. Daughter, come.

Some effort has it cost to tell your story,
 But profit comes of it. Your cause is strong.
 Your vows, which virtually are another's,
 Heaven doth itself forbid you give the count !
 Is't not so, nephew ?

Lor. There I'll found the plea,
 Which to the conscience of the duke I'll put.
 Knows he, whom, at his death—which I'm advised
 Took place in Mantua—your father named
 Your guardian—knows the commissary this,
 Which thou hast now related ?

Mari. Not from me.

My father's death was sudden.—Long time since !
 He and the commissary were mere acquaintance.
 What pass'd between them, save the testament
 Which left me ward unto the commissary,
 I am a stranger to.

Lor. Since you came hither
 Him have you seen, for sake of whom you came ?

Mari. No !

Lor. Nor hast clue direct, or indirect,
 To find him out ?

Mari. No, signor.

Lor. And how long
Have you sojourn'd in Mantua?

Mari. Two years.

Lor. And is your love the same?

Mari. Am I the same?

Lor. Such constancy should win a blessing.

Ant. Yes!

And strange as 'tis, what seems to us affliction
Is oft the hand that helps us to our wish.

So may it fall with thee—if Heaven approves! [*They go out.*]

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Hall of Justice in the Duke's Palace.*

On one side BARTOLO, BERNARDO, CARLO, and others; *on the other, Lords and Ladies, &c. &c.*

Bar. Silence, signors! Keep order! The parties in the cause are coming—Here they are!

Enter MARIANA, leaning on ANTONIO, attended by LORENZO; after them the COUNT FLORIO, and various Doctors of the Law.

Bar. That is the maiden; and that the curate, upon whom she leans.

Bern. And where's the count?

Bar. Yonder, surrounded by the Doctors of the Law.

Bern. The maid is very fair!

Bar. Yes, for a burgher's daughter. Hush! The duke approaches.

The cause will straight come on.

Enter the DUKE FERRARDO GONZAGA, and Attendants.

Fer. Your seats! your seats! [*The whole assembly rise.*]
Bring on this cause! Who answers for our friend, [*The assembly sit.*]
The count?

Advo. My lord, so please you, I.

Fer. Proceed.

Advo. The question lies between the count, and this,
The guardian of the maid—whose froward act
Your highness is possess'd of—on the one side;
The maid herself, and that, the reverend man,
Who countenances her resistance, on
The other. Hereupon the count defends
His right unto the maiden's hand—the will
Her father left—the promise of the man

Therein, declared her guardian, unto whom
 Behoves her choice to bow—for choice herself
 The maid, of right, hath none.—This were the case,
 Proposed her guardian to affiance her
 To one in rank as far beneath the maid
 As is the maid beneath the count. But lo
 The difference! By this alliance gains
 The maid a consort of a rank so high
 And wealth so broad, he were pretender fit
 To the hand of any maid in Italy!
 Such is our cause. In the first place, the right
 To give away the maid: and in the next
 That right, exerted for her highest good.

Bar. He is a fair spokesman—The duke deliberates.

Lor. My friend is lost, almost as soon as found.
 He has deceived me. No! he comes at last,
 And keeps indeed his promise, if he brings
 Such friends as these to back us!

*Enter LEONARDO GONZAGA as Clerk to LORENZO; followed by
 several persons of distinction.*

Bar. Observe you, signors! Are not those who just now
 entered, relatives and friends of him that were the duke, had
 not mishap stepped in 'twixt him and his father's seat?

Bar. They are.

Bar. Do they abet the maid? You see they take their
 station round her.—They are not wont, of late, to frequent the
 palace.

Bar. Peace! The duke is going to speak.

Fer. Count, on what plea claim you the maiden's hand?

Florio. Her guardian hath affianced her to me.

Fer. Speak you, her guardian,—states the count the fact?

Hugo. He does, so please your highness!

Fer. What's her age?

Hugo. She lacks a year of her majority.

Fer. Her rank?

Hugo. Her father was a burgher.

Fer. Wealth

Has she been left?

Hugo. What, charily enjoy'd,
 From manual labour might, perhaps, exempt her.

Fer. And stoops the count so low to be despised—
 Rejected—spurn'd! For shame! The maid be given
 Back to her guardian's custody; and if
 Obedience be refused, let him enforce it!
 The cause is judged.

Lor. Your highness' pardon, but
 The other side's to hear.

Fer. Who's he that speaks?

Lor. The counsel for the maid.

Fer. Let him be wise,

And not gainsay our pleasure.—It is told!
The cause is over—finally adjudged.

Lor. How far your highness' power extends I know!
Yet though it reach unto my life, that life
I hold to be my good, and husband not
A minute longer than it ministers
Unto mine honour's profitable use.
The duty which I should discharge in vain,—
Not through its own demerit, but defect
In him, whose will availeth more than right,—
I leave undone :—but 'gainst the power protest
Which makes me—servant unto justice—slave
Unto oppression. For the pangs that wring
That maiden's heart, be answerable thou,
Not I!

Ant. Your highness—

Fer. Peace! I will not hear thee, father!

Ant. But Heaven will hear me! Lo! I do call upon it
For judgment on the man who wrongs this maid!
And surely as I call 'twill answer me,—
And speak to thee—be thou that wicked man—
When power thou hast no longer to cry "Peace!"

Fer. That wicked man!

Ant. O, poverty of earth—
That men do deeds which win them evil names,
And spurn the names, but not the deeds which win them!
What Heaven commands me speak, I dare to speak!
Suffer'd the maid, from any, violence,
Should he not die? What callest thou the deed
Which would condemn her to a loathéd bed?
Think'st thou there's virtue in constrained vows,
Half-utter'd—soulless—falter'd forth in fear,
To purge the nauseousness of such a deed,
That Heaven won't smell the damning odour on't?
And if there is, then truth and grace are nought!
Then sanctity is nought! yea, Heaven itself!
And in its empyreal essence lies
No savour of its sweetness!

Fer. Peace, I say!

Ant. Thou canst not bid the thunder hold its peace—
Why criest thou peace to me?—Nay, bid me speak—
That thou mayst bear to hear the thunder speak—
The herald, earth-accredited of Heaven—
Which when men hear, they think upon Heaven's King,
And run the items o'er of the account
To which he's sure to call them.

Fer. Dread my power!

Ant. Dread thou—the power from which thou hold'st that
power!
Proud man, I brave thee where thou sitt'st, and in
The ear of earth and heaven denounce the sentence
Which gives that spotless maid to violation!

Fer. I'll hear no more!—The cause is judged—the maid
Her rightful guardian take!

Mari. [*Advancing to centre.*] And if he does,
He takes a corse! Lo! death is at my lips;
[*Taking a small phial from her bosom.*

The hand or foot that offers to approach,
Commits a murder! In this phial bides
The bane of fifty lives! Pass but a drop,
Were now the sexton told to dig my grave,
Were now his foot upon the shovel set,
Ere he began, I should be ready for it!
Who stirs? Lo, here I sink upon my knee!
Or let the count his hateful suit forego,
Or let my guardian his consent revoke,
Or let the duke recall his foul decree,
Or hence, by mine own limbs, I never rise!

Fer. Why to the count this strong repugnance, girl?

Mari. Giv'st thou thy oath that none shall stir, I'll tell
thee.

Fer. I give it thee.

Mari. I am a maid betrothed!

All but the rites, a wife! A wedded heart
Although unwedded hand! Reflect on that!
Making me give my hand unto the count,
You make me give what is another's right;—
Constraining me to an unrighteous act,
Contenting him where it is base to wish,
And doing violence to Heaven itself,
Which curses lips that move 'gainst consciences!

Fer. Lives he of whom you speak in Mantua?

Mari. In Mantua, he told me he did live.

Fer. What! know you not the place of his sojourn?

Mari. Yes! where he still sojourns where'er he is!

Fer. And where is that?

Mari. My heart! Though travels he
By land or sea—though I'm in Mantua,
And he as distant as the pole away—
I look but into that, and there he is,
Its king enthroned, with every thought, wish, will,
In waiting at his feet!

Fer. This is the mood—

The fantasy—of girlhood! Do we hold
Our power on sufferance of a baby-maid,
Who mocks us with a threat she durst not keep!
Secure her!

Mari. Lo, the phial's at my lips!
Let him who would commit a murder, do it!
Had he a thousand hands to wait upon thee,
The slightest movement of this little one
Would make them useless all!

Leon. My Mariana!

Fer. She has dropp'd the phial!

Leon. [*Coming forward.*] Stir not, on your lives!
My Mariana!

Mari. 'Tis he!

Leon. It is, my love!

'Tis he who won thy heart, not seeking it!
'Tis he whose heart thou wonn'st, not knowing it!
Who saw thee rich in all but fortune's gifts,
And—servant unto men, though lord of them—
Balanced their poor esteem against thy wealth,
Which kingdoms could not match! Accountable
To others, never I reveal'd the love,
I did not see the way for thee to bless;
As only thou wouldst bless it! Now that way
Is clear!—Is open!—lies before me straight,
Without impediment, or anything
Which, with the will, I cannot overleap!
And now, my love before! my love till now!
And still my love!—now, now, I call thee wife,
And wed thee here—here—here—in Mantua!

Fer. Remove that slave who knows not where he is!

Leon. Descend, great duke, who know'st not where thou
sitt'st!

Fer. Where do I sit?

Leon. Why in thy cousin's seat!

Fer. He's dead!

Leon. He's not! He lives, and claims his seat,
Back'd by his kinsmen, friends, and every one
That owns a loyal heart in Mantua! [*Throws off his gown.*]
Do you not know me, cousin?

Fer. Leonardo!

Leon. Six years have we been strangers, but I see
You know my father's face, if not your cousin's.

Fer. I do, and yield to you that father's seat.

Leon. Cousin, the promptness of your abdication
Invests it with a grace to which we bow.

We'll spare your sight the pain of our accession,
And pray that with the parties in this cause—

I mean the count and guardian of the maid—

You now withdraw, and at your former mansion,
Wait intimation of our further pleasure.

I would not have you speak, so please you, now;
When we confer, it must be privily.

Yet out of honour to our common blood,

Well as in pledge of no unkind intent,

Your hand before we go!

[*They shake hands.*]

Fer. Nay, let me speak

At least my welcome, and my thanks, your highness—

Before I take my leave. [*FERRARDO, FLORIO, and HUGO, go out.*]

Ant. Rise, signors, rise!

Live, Leonardo, duke of Mantua!

Leon. We thank you, friends! This welcome is of the heart.
For you we take this seat. Thou reverend man,

Be confessor unto the duke of Mantua ;
 Thou man of law and honour, be his friend,
 And advocate of state ; and both of you
 Lead hither that abstracted maid ! But no !
 That office should be mine. [*Descends.*] In Italy
 Shines there a brow on which my coronet
 Could find so proud a seat ? My Mariana,
 Wilt be my bride ? Nay, do not tax thy tongue'
 With that, thy looks have scarce the power to speak !
 Come !—Share my throne with me ! Come, Mariana !
 The consort of the duke of Mantua !

[*She faints in his arms as the scene closes.*]

SCENE II.—*A Room in the Palace.*

Enter Cosmo and Courier.

Cos. The duke ? which duke ? I know now not which ; we
 have had two within the last ten minutes ; I know not which
 duke it is thou wantest.

Cour. I tell thee, the duke of Mantua.

Cos. Is thy business public or private ?

Cour. Dost thou not see I come from Rome ? There are
 great matters on foot, which it behoves the duke to know ;
 and herein, if I mistake not, he is apprised of them,

Cos. Nay, then, thy business is public, and of course con-
 cerns the reigning duke.

Cour. Of course it does.

Cos. I'll bring thee to him.

Cour. Lead on !

Enter BARTOLO, BERNARDO, and MARCO, meeting them.

Bar. Signor Cosmo !

Cos. Don't stop me, Signor Bartolo. I'm in haste.

Bar. Nay, a word—only a word. Who is that ?

Cos. A courier from Rome.

Bar. I was right, Bernardo. Save you, signor. You come,
 I hear, from Rome. How are they all at Rome ?

Cour. Well, signor—all that I am acquainted with.

Bar. They have a great deal of news in Rome.

Cour. Sufficient, signor.

Bar. One likes to hear the news.

Cour. I trouble myself little about it.

Bar. That is because 'tis your vocation to hear it. Nobody
 is in love with his vocation. Now 'tis the reverse with me.
 I mind the news as much as I mind my meals. Pray you,
 signor, have mercy upon a hungry man, and tell me the news
 from Rome.

Cour. Great news, signor,—there is going to be a war.

Bar. A war ! A war, Bernardo—Cosmo—and pray you,
 signor, with what power are they going to war ?

Cour. With the French.

Bar. The devil!

Cour. You will have a fine opportunity for showing your valour, signor.

Bar. I thank you, signor. I was never an ostentatious man, I am content to be a man of valour—I don't care to show it; but I thank you for the news. Come along, Bernardo—Carlo. A war, signors, a war! What a glorious thing is a war! Here's news!

[They go out severally.]

SCENE III.—*The Vestibule before the Ducal Palace.*

Enter ST. PIERRE.

St. P. Here be my seat upon the palace-steps,
Although they hang me from the portico!
Have a heart, Poverty, thou hast nought to lose,—
Nor land, nor mansion, nor habiliments,
That thou shouldst play the craven! That thou call'st
Thy life—what is it?—Hunger!—Nakedness!
A lodging 'neath the eaves! ten scornful looks
For one of pity; and that one a proof
That thou'rt an anguish to the sight of men!
Then what carest thou for cuffs? Nay, cuff again,
That they may fall the heavier!—satisfied
That he who brains thee, does thee, Poverty,
A thousand times the good, he does thee ill!—
Come—keep the portal of the mighty duke,
Who made thee what thou art; nor let him pass
Till from his fear thou wring'st an alms, or else
A quick release obtainest from his wrath!

Fer. *[without].* Be sure thou keep'st the hour.

St. P. Talk of the fiend,
They say, and here he comes! Here comes the duke.

Fer. *[Entering.]* Hoa!—Clear the vestibule!

St. P. Great duke, descend!
No retinue impedes your gracious way!
Here is no throng,—for Poverty sits here
Craving a foot of your fair palace-steps,
For lack of better resting-place.

Fer. Who are you?
What do you here!

St. P. Wait, mighty duke, an alms!
I could not ask the humble craftsman one,
I used to cuff him;—nor the tradesman one,
I used to make him doff his cap to me;—
Nor yet the merchant one, he gave me way,
Or I gave him my shoulder;—nor the courtier,
My hilt I handled soon as he touch'd his;—
In brief, I pass'd by all degrees of men,
To beg an alms of the most gracious duke!

Fer. Here !

St. P. What ! a florin ? give it to the street,
For the abaséd eye of vagrantry !
I make no livelihood of raggedness !

Fer. Scorn'st thou my gift ?

St. P. Thy gift and thee, great duke !
Nay, frown not ! Choler will disturb digestion,
And mar thy pleasant afternoon's repast ;
Leave wrath to me, who have not tasted food
Since Wednesday last,—nor look for meal to-day.

Fer. Why, that would buy thee five !

St. P. What were five meals—
To starve anew ! I should not light on thee
A second time to beg another alms !
Thou wouldst take care to shun me ! Better starve
Outright,—for, saving thee, most gracious duke,
There's not a man in Mantua I'd stoop
To ask a ducat of.

Fer. Well, there's a ducat.

St. P. It will not do !

Fer. What hoa there !

St. P. Softly, duke !

Hush ! better far that we confer alone,
For thy sake ! mark !—for thy sake, gracious duke !

Fer. What means the villain ?

St. P. Right, duke, that's my name !
What do I mean ? I'll tell thee what I mean.
My wardrobe wants replenishing ; if puffs
The wind, my hat is like to lose its crown ;
My robe is all the covering I have ;
My shoes are minus nearly all the soles !
And, then, I fain would change my lodgings, duke—
Which, sooth to say, is e'en the open street—
Less spacious would content me ; last of all
I would be master of a larder, duke,
Would serve me, at the shortest, good a month,
That I might live so long at ease, and see
If aught turn'd up would make it worth my while
To shake a hand with the fair world again,
And live on terms with it.—Most gracious duke,
Give me a hundred ducats !

Fer. Dost thou think
To rob me at the palace-gates !

St. P. Who robs,
Provides him weapons. I have none, great duke,
Nor pistol, rapier, poniard,—not a knife :
I parted with them, one by one, for food !
For weeks have they been provender to me !
Think upon that, great duke, that at a meal
Spend'st twenty times their produce ; and, so please you,
Give me a hundred ducats !

Fer. Thou art mad !

St. P. No, by *St. Jago*!—Try me! I have the use
Of my wits. I'll neither leap into a flood,
Nor run into a fire! I can tell
The day of the week, the month of the year, the year;
I'll name you which are fast-days, which are not—
But that's no wonder, I have kept so many—
To balance this, I'll name you feast-days too!
I'll write and cipher for you;—finally,
I'll give you all the fractions to a jot,
That lie in a hundred ducats!

Servants enter from the Palace.

Fer. Seize him!

St. P. Stop *[Menacing the servants, who pause.]*
Till you have learn'd my name! Imports you much
To know it! 'Tis affix'd, most gracious duke,
To certain documents which only wait
Your leave to see the light.

Fer. What documents?

St. P. Shall these o'erhear, or private be our speech?

Fer. *[To Servants.]* You may withdraw a pace or two.

St. P. You see,
Great duke, I am not mad!

Fer. What documents?

St. P. One memorandum for a hundred crowns,
For whipping one that dared offend your grace.
I paid me with the pleasure of the task,
Nor ask'd the hire, but kept the document.
Another, for enticing to a haunt
Of interdicted play, a wealthy heir.
I scorn'd the hire for that,—though shame to say it,
I did not scorn to earn it—but I kept
The document.—A third—

Fer. Enough—*St. Pierre*!

St. P. Aha! you know me now?

Fer. How changed thou art,—
I ne'er had known thee!

St. P. It were strange if want
Look'd like abundance—which was never yet
Akin to it.

Fer. Here take my purse!

St. P. 'Tis rich—
Holds it a hundred ducats?

Fer. Twice the sum—
I want thee—that suffice!

St. P. That does suffice.

Fer. Get thee habiliments more rich than these,—
Appointments, too, fit to consort with them;
And come thou to mine ancient mansion straight.

St. P. I must dine first.

Fer. Eat sparingly.

St. P. Indeed!

I see thou want'st me then—I'll go and dine.

Fer. Thy tears are not a pledge for continence.

St. P. I'll dine upon a crust! Nay, fear me not—
What time am I to take in all?—Two hours?

Fer. The half might serve thee.

St. P. Well; we'll say the half,—
The quarter shall suffice me, if thou wilt!

Fer. Make it as brief as may be.

St. P. Work that's sweet
Is quickly done!—I'll come in half an hour.

[*Goes out.*]

Fer. That which had been my bane, an hour ago,
Is now my medicine! This fellow owns
A quick and subtle wit; a reckless daring;
And hath a winning tongue, withal, and 'haviour.
Easy of conscience, too—yet, still, contrived
To keep some credit with the court. I know
The use of him. He has been mine, and mine
He needs must be again. So!—Suddenly
He quitted Mantua, and left with none
A clue to find the cause,—nor lack'd he then
Wardrobe or ducat! Misery has changed him;—
Her work abundance quickly shall undo!
I know the use of him, and I will use him.

Enter COUNT FLORIO.

Now, count, what brings you hither?

Florio. News, my lord,
That's sure of welcome! A brief honeymoon
Hath fate decreed your cousin! Scarce he takes
The seat were fitter yours, and weds his bride,
Ere comes advice the states must take the field
Against the power of France.

Fer. Good news indeed!

Florio. Forthwith he hies to Rome—

Fer. Most welcome news!

Florio. And by entreaty of his council, you—
As next in rank and lineage—are appointed
Our regent in his absence.

Fer. That's the best news.

Florio. His heart—that was against you—softened
Or by prosperity, or your ready yielding,
Or giving way on sudden exigence;
He offers reconciliation, by your friends,
And, straight, you are invited to his presence.

Fer. I come!—Great news!—I thank you!—Glorious news!
[*They go out.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in the Palace.**Enter FERRARDO and FLORIO.**Fer.* Another victory !*Florio.* So the rumour runs.

Fer. Why Fortune plays the minion to him !—does
 His wish not only, but anticipates it !
 Chief after chief she thrusts aside, that he
 May head the war ; and, when he takes the lead,
 Her moody favour, wavering before—
 Alternate sun and cloud—shines fully forth
 With strong and steady beam. Have many fallen ?

Florio. A host, 'tis said, on either side.

Fer. No wound,
 No hurt for him ?

Florio. 'Tis so reported.*Fer.* So—

Florio. Though twice he changed his charger—one disabled,
 The second wounded, mortally !

Fer. And he
 As safe, as sitting in his ducal chair !
 Why dangers, that are thorns to other men,
 For him convert to flowers !

Florio. The duchess still
 Persists in her seclusion ?

Fer. There, again,
 I'm baffled ! Would she mingle with the court,
 His home of peace might compass for me what
 I vainly hope for from the field of war,—
 The downfall of his rule ! I know my cousin ;
 For thoughtless boyhood often shows the man
 Which wary manhood hides. A sense he has,
 That's sickly tender to the touch of shame.
 I have seen him, at a slight imputed fault
 Colour to flame—anon grow ashy pale—
 The dew in drops upon his forehead starting,—
 His tongue without its use—his mouth agape—
 His universal frame, vacuity
 Of action and of power,—and, anon,
 The glare and din, and tossing of the tempest !
 To wound his honour to the quick, would be
 To sting his core of life !

Florio. Thou couldst not hope
 To wound it through his wife ; whose love for him,
 Gives, in his absence, all things to neglect !
 Her bounding palfrey cannot woo her forth !
 The palace vibrates with the dance, and still
 She keeps her chamber, like a lone recluse.
 Music, howe'er you try, can't tempt her from it,

She shuns its harmony as though 'twould jar !
 She visits no one—no one she receives !
 What chance of practising upon a wife,
 Who for an only absent lord, observes
 A sterner widowhood, than many hold
 In honour of a dead one !—Why do you smile ?

Fer. To think, to what account a little art
 Might turn a little swerving, in a case
 Of self-denial, carried thus like hers
 To the admired extreme ! I would St. Pierre
 Had kept his restless spirit more in check,
 Paid to my will submission, as he used,
 And not enlisted in my cousin's train,
 But stopp'd in Mantua ! My plans were laid,
 Were sure, and long ere this had been matured,
 But for his wilfulness.

Florio. Of what avail
 Had been his presence here ?

Fer. I should have found
 A use for him ! Ne'er knew I yet the ear
 He could not keep a hold of, once he caught it.
 That fellow, with his tongue, has won more hearts
 Than any twenty men in Mantua,
 With tongues, and forms, and faces ! I had contrived
 To throw him in her way !

Florio. There were no chance—

Fer. I know,—but I could make appearances
 Supply the place of facts—especially
 In her husband's absence—so that confidence,
 Itself, would construe guilt where no guilt was !
 So would I show her to the eyes of all,
 That, though she were like snow itself, new fallen,
 Men would believe her spotted !

Florio. If 'twere true
 That he it was who hither brought the news
 Of this new victory—

Fer. Saint Pierre ?

Florio. Saint Pierre.

Fer. 'Tis so reported ?

Florio. 'Tis.

Fer. Then, prove it true,
 Before he is an hour in Mantua
 He must be stripp'd of every ducat ! Mind,
 Of that must thou take care !
 What mean those shouts ?

[Shouts.

Florio. They herald, doubtless, the approach of him
 That's bearer of the news.

Fer. Be it Saint Pierre,
 The moment he alights away with him
 To a house of play !—You are his master—Haste !
 Your beckon he will answer readily,
 As the game-bird his welcome challenger !

Florio. I'll do my best.

Fer. So do.—The confessor?
The cards come round to me! A score to one,
I hold the winning hand.—His reverence,
I have contrived to make at last my friend.
Your churchman dearly loves a convertite,
And he believes me his. A kindly man,
But, once confirm'd in error, positive;
And, from his calling, credulous to weakness,
Touching the proneness of the flesh to sin.
I have well examined him.

[*Goes out.*
[*Looking out.*

Enter ANTONIO.

Your blessing, father.

Ant. Thou hast it, son.

Fer. Whence come you now? No doubt
From the performance of some pious deed—
The shriving of some sin-oppressed soul—
The soothing of some sorrow-stricken heart—
Or sweet relieving of some needy child
Of merciless adversity.

Ant. No, my son,—

But from a trespasser that's, yet, unshriven;
A daughter who has swerved, and on whose soul
I had thought as soon to find the soil of sin
As tarnish upon new-refined gold!
A wife, who in the absence of her lord,
Lived like thy cousin's wife; with means to bless
Desires incontinent, a miracle
Of self-secluded, lonely chastity.

Fer. He comes in the very vein! You spoke just now
Of my cousin's wife. There's news of my dear cousin,
And, with submission, I would recommend
Her grace to show herself, to-day. Methinks,
If only for her health, she keeps herself
Too much alone.

Ant. So have I told her grace.

Fer. Indeed! I marvel that she perseveres
In the face of your admonishment! More strict
Would she be thought, than you, a holy man,
Would counsel her to be? Forgive me, father,
If 'tis uncharitable in me, but
I never loved extremes! Your constant weather
Is still the moderate, father. Storms and calms
Are brief.

Ant. You are right, my son.

Fer. I had been pleased
Less had she shown her fondness for her lord.
Love, of its own fidelity assured,
Ne'er studies the display on't!

Ant. Nay; she loves
Her lord.

Fer. And yet 'tis the predicament
 Of love to wane upon possession. Where
 I note an over-acted guardedness,
 I still infer a consciousness of weakness ;
 And look to find—and seldom look in vain—
 Some sudden giving way ! Besides, in passion,
 Excess is sign of its decaying, rather
 Than lasting. Thus the frantic widow, who
 To-day would make her husband's grave her bed,
 A few months hence, enjoys another bed
 Beside another husband ! Maids, new-wed,
 Who gloried in their choices, and with reason,
 Leave them for new ones, for *no* reason, but
 Because they are new ! By love of novelty
 Is human happiness too oft ensnared.
 Mere novelty !—the common tempting bait,
 Which gives, too oft, a worth to worthless things ;
 Luring us to forsake the good we have
 For something else, which, mostly, proves our bane !
 I would not doubt my cousin's wife, but wish
 She moved, like other honourable dames,
 Secure in her own truth. The life she leads
 Something too much, methinks, solicits note,
 Not by design, but in appearance only.
 Yet had she more confided in herself,
 Lived like herself—appear'd among the court—
 Courteous to all—particular to none,
 Save those to whom, next to her lord, she owes
 Her highest duty—my reliance on her
 Were stronger ! Is't uncharitable, father,
 To say so ?—speak, and frankly—Wherefore else
 Put I my heart into your saintly hands ?

Ant. Nay, son—I think you speak in charity,
 As one who blames through love. We'll see the duchess,
 And jointly recommend to her a life
 Of less severe restraint.

Fer. I thank your reverence !
 You know I owe her grace some small amends,
 And trust me, father, gladly would I make them ! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*Ante-Room to the Chamber of the Duchess—
 A Window overlooking the Street.*

Enter FLORIBEL.

Flo. A merry life for twenty-one to lead,
 And in a woman too ! from morn till night
 Mew'd in a lonely tower ! Heigho ! It is
 My lady's will. I would she had been born
 In Mantua, where wives their husbands love
 'n reason ! Well !—We'll live in hope she'll learn

In time. I used to lead a dozen kinds
 Of life, in a day!—Now, in a dozen days,
 I lead but one! Ere breakfast, was a nun;
 Then play'd the housewife; after that, to horse;
 Then, dinner o'er, a Naiad on the lake,
 Floating to music! Evening changed the scene
 Again; and night brought on the closing scene,
 With open casement, list'ning, by the moon,
 The melting cadence of the serenade!
 Now morning, evening, noon, and night are nought—
 But morning, evening, noon, and night. No change
 Save in their turns and names! What I get up,
 I last throughout the day, and so lie down;
 The solitary lady of the duchess!
 And how I bear it! Wonderfully! Past
 Belief! I'll do't no longer! If I do,
 Then never was I born in Mantua. [Shouts.
 What's that?—[Looks out.]—The city all astir!—A crowd
 Before the palace—I will ope the casement:—
 I feel as I could leap into the street! [Opens casement.]

Enter MARIANA.

Mari. What do you at the casement, Floribel?

Flo. Look from it, madam.

Mari. That I see. At what?

Flo. At crowds of happy people, madam,—
 Some standing, others walking, others running;
 All doing what they list—like merry birds
 At liberty.

Mari. Come from the casement!—Shut it.

Flo. Nay, rather you approach it, madam! Do!
 And look from't too—There's news, and from your lord!
 Look—There's the courier!

Mari. [Approaching the window.] Where?

Flo. That cavalier,
 Who tries to pass along, but cannot, so
 The people press upon him.

Enter FERRARDO and ANTONIO.

Fer. [Aside to ANTONIO.] At the casement!

Mari. Who is that cavalier?

Flo. The courier, madam.

Mari. I know—but who is he?

His family—His name? I cannot take
 My eyes from his face! who is he? Can't you tell?
 I have a strange desire to know his name!

Fer. [Aside to ANTONIO.] Father!

Flo. I'll fly and learn it.

Mari. Do, good girl!

And soon as you have learn'd, fly back again!

[FLORIBEL goes out.]

Fer. [*Aside to ANTONIO.*] I pray you mark, but speak not—
 [*Approaches the window on tiptoe, returns, and speaks to himself.*]

It is Saint Pierre!

Incredible! [*To ANTONIO.*] It is the courier, father,
 Of whom they were discoursing.

Mari. I have lost him!

He has enter'd the palace—I should like again
 To see him—I should like to speak to him!

Fer. [*Aside to ANTONIO.*] My life on't, she will hold a court
 to-day—

Accost her, father.

Ant. Benedicite

Fair daughter.

Mari. Father!—What, his grace!—I think,
 Or I mistake, there's news from my dear lord?

Ant. Madam, there is, and happy news.—Your lord
 Has won another victory!

Fer. All Mantua

Would have a heart of overflowing joy,
 Would but your highness notify your will
 To let it speak its happiness, and pay
 Congratulations to you.—May I hope
 You do not pause from doubt? Your confessor
 Approves your highness somewhat should relax
 Your life of close seclusion.

Mari. [*After a pause.*] Be it so.

Fer. [*Aside to ANTONIO.*] I told you, father—

[*FLORIBEL re-enters.*]

Flo. Madam, he is call'd—

Fer. St. Pierre—You mean the courier
 That brought these happy tidings?

Mari. Floribel,

I want your aid. My lord, and reverend father,
 Soon as my toilet's made, I shall descend.

[*MARIANA and FLORIBEL go out.*]

Ant. What kind of man is this?

Fer. A kind of devil,

That grasps you with his eye—as fascinate
 Serpents, 'tis said, their prey.—A tongue to match,
 In glosing speech, the master-fiend himself!
 I'm troubled, father. Was the dame you spoke of
 Indeed a pattern, like my cousin's wife,
 Of saintly self-denial?

Ant. Yes, my son.

Fer. I grieve we urged her highness with her presence
 To grace the court to-day. I tremble for her.
 Come! Shall I tell thee something—No, I will not!
 When you can lead the sea, you'll sound the depth
 Of woman's art.—Would you believe it—No—
 While there's a doubt, suspicion should be dumb.
 Think'st thou I would have back'd her guardian's suit

But that I knew he had his reasons?—'Sdeath!
 What am I doing?—Come, your reverence,
 The man of proper charity condemns not,
 Except upon enforcement. All is right!

[*They go out.*]

SCENE III.—*A Room in the Palace.*

Enter FLORIO and COSMO.

Florio. Where is the regent?

Cos. With the confessor

In the chamber of the duchess. Nay, my lord,
 He has quitted it, and is here.

Florio. You may withdraw.

[*COSMO goes out on one side. Enter FERRARDO on the other.*]

Fer. Well? where's St. Pierre?—I thought you were together!

Florio. We were, but parted for a moment. Fortune,
 In the task you set me, kindly has forestall'd me.
 Halting to bait within some miles of this,
 He met a friend, whose hand he scarce had shaken
 Ere the ready dice were out. In brief, your grace,
 He has enter'd Mantua ducatless!—Of my own counsel
 I broke to him your need of his assistance,
 Touching your cousin's wife—and promised him—
 A pledge, I knew your highness will redeem—
 Replenish'd coffers, would he undertake
 To pleasure you.

Fer. Will he do it?

Florio. Sullenly,

But fully he consented—He is here.

Fer. Retire a little.

[*Count retires.*]

Enter ST. PIERRE.

Welcome, St. Pierre!—welcome my friend!—I'm glad
 To see you.

St. P. Would you take me for a knave?

Fer. What mean you?

St. P. Would you take me for a knave?

Fer. No.

St. P. No? Why then I'm fit to do your pleasure.
 Come!—To my work!—When am I to begin?

Fer. The matter?

St. P. I have lived an honest life
 These six months—Knavery is new to me!
 I set about it feverishly.

Fer. What!

Is't knavery to net a pretty woman?
 They catch birds so.

St. P. Pshaw!—I am past the time.

Fer. Mind is the brightness of the body—lights it,

When years, its proper but less subtle fire
 Begins to dim. Man, I could tell thee how
 She conn'd thy visage from her casement ; sent
 Her confidante to learn thy name : seem'd lost
 At losing thee ! Win thou discourse with her,
 And hold it when thou winn'st it.—'Twill content me
 Thou make her but the object of remark.
 Away ! Go lean on yonder pedestal,
 And watch thy opportunity to draw
 Her notice towards thee—Thy obeisance does it ;
 Or anything most slight ; her lord's success
 Is plea that you accost her. She is new
 To the court,—a stranger to its law of distance,
 Which 'tis expedient thou infringe ! Couldst master
 Aught that's about her person—say a ring,
 A brooch, a chain, in curiosity
 Besought of her for near inspection, then
 Mislaid or dropp'd—not to be found again,—
 It were a thousand ducats in thy hand !
 'Sdeath, man, hold up thy head, and look at Fortune,
 That smiles on thee, and asks thee to embrace her !
 What dost thou gaze at ?

St. P. Who is that ?

Fer. The duchess.

St. P. Indeed, a lady of surpassing beauty !

Fer. An irksome task, methinks, I've set you—Come !
 About it !—To thy post !

St. P. Surpassing fair !

[*Goes out.*]

Fer. [*Looking after him.*] He has caught her eye already,—
 excellent !

He bows to her ! Does she curtsy ?—yes, i' faith !

And to the very ground ! You're welcome, sir !

He speaks to her ! How takes she his advances ?

She entertains them ! They pass on in converse !

Hold it but on, she's lost !

[*FLORIO comes down.*]

Do you see ?

Florio. So soon !

I wish him fortune ! As I loved her once,

I even loathe her now !

Fer. Could you believe it ?

He crosses her, and straight her eye is caught !

He speaks, and straight is master of her ear !

Solace for baffled hopes ! From infancy

I loathed my cousin for his elder right,

And leap'd into his seat with lighter spring,

Than he, I thought, had miss'd it ! He returns,

And I, with humbled brow, in sight of all

Descend, that he may mount ! I'll pay him shame

For shame ;—but he shall have't with interest !

Where is the confessor ? I must to him.

Mix with the company, and point to them

The eye of questioning remark. With looks

Speak sentences!—More surely does not raise
 One wave another wave, than marvel grows
 On marvel.—Interjections have a world
 Of argument! “Incredible!”—“Odd!”—“Strange!”
 Will make a thousand hearers prick their ears,
 And conjure wonders out of commonest things!
 Then with commiseration you may do
 A murder easily! “Alack!” “Alas!”
 Use daggers that seem tears.—Away! Away!
 For now or never is the golden hour!

[*They go out.*]

SCENE IV.—*Another Room in the Palace.*

Enter MARIANA and ST. PIERRE.

Mari. I thank you for the story of your travels:
 You make me wish to see the world, of which
 Such wonders you relate. I think you said,
 You were but newly come to Mantua?
 You must have been in Mantua before, then,
 So many seem to know you?

St. P. I have been
 Before in Mantua.

Mari. 'Tis very strange,
 But when I saw thee first, I felt as if
 We were of old acquaintance! have we met
 Before?

St. P. No, lady.

Mari. It is very strange,
 You never were in Switzerland?

St. P. Oh, yes!
 It is my birth-place.

Mari. Ay! so is it mine.
 'Tis a dear country! never met we there?

St. P. No.

Mari. No? 'Tis odd! How many years is't, since
 You were in Switzerland?

St. P. Good fifteen years.

Mari. So long! I was an infant then—No—No!
 We have not met before—'Tis odd!—At least

You are my countryman! [*Holding out her hands to him.*]

[*Visitors have been occasionally crossing the stage during
 this scene, observing MARIANA and ST. PIERRE.*]

Enter in the background, ANTONIO and FERRARDO.

Fer. Had I been told it,
 I would not have believed it.

Mari. Switzerland
 Is a dear country! Switzerland!

St. P. It is
 The land of beauty, and of grandeur, lady,
 Where looks the cottage out on a domain,

The palace cannot boast of. Seas of lakes,
 And hills of forests ! crystal waves that rise
 'Midst mountains all of snow, and mock the sun,
 Returning him his flaming beams more thick
 And radiant than he sent them.—Torrents, there,
 Are bounding floods ! and there the tempest roams
 At large, in all the terrors of its glory !
 And then our valleys ! Ah, they are the homes
 For hearts ! Our cottages, our vineyards, orchards !—
 Our pastures studded with the herd and fold !
 Our native strains that melt us as we sing them !
 A free—a gentle—simple—honest people !

Mari. I see them, signor,—I'm in Switzerland !
 I do not stand in Mantua !—Dear country !
 Except in one thing, I'm not richer, signor,
 Than when I was a child in Switzerland,
 And mistress only of this little cross.

[Pressing the cross to her breast.]

St. P. [anxiously]. Your pardon, lady ! Pray you let me see
 That cross again !

Mari. Right willingly.

Ant. [Coming forward.] Hence, signor !

Mari. Father !

Ant. I pray your grace retire—but first
 Command that libertine from the apartment !

St. P. [Sternly surveying alternately ANTONIO and FERRARDO.] I go, your reverence, of mine own accord.

[Goes out, followed by FERRARDO.]

Mari. Father, what meant you by that word which turn'd
 My very blood to ice ?

Ant. Behoves your highness
 To keep your eye upon your husband's honour,
 If not upon your own !

Mari. How !

Ant. Heaven alone
 Can judge the heart.—Men must decide by actions,
 And yours, to-night, to all have given offence.

Mari. Offence !

Ant. A woman hath in every state
 Most need of circumspection ;—most of all
 When she becomes a wife !—She is a spring
 Must not be doubted ; if she is, no oath
 That earth can utter will so purge the stream
 That men will think it pure !

Mari. Is this to me ?

Ant. Women who play the wanton—

Mari. Father !

Ant. Daughter !
 That look and tone of high command become
 Thy state indeed—

Mari. No, father, not my state—

They become me!—State greater—higher far,
 One who deserved that name I blush'd to hear—
 And thou, a reverend man, shouldst blush to use—
 Might fill! but though it were an empress's,
 I would defy her in her breast to seat
 The heart that's throned in mine! If 'tis a crime
 To boast—Heaven pardon you—you have made me sin!

Ant. Behoves us heed appearances?

Mari. No, father,
 Behoves us heed desires and thoughts, and let
 Appearances be what they may be!—You
 Shall never shape them so, that evil men
 Will not their own construction put upon them.
 Father, it was the precept of my father.

Ant. He little knew the world.

Mari. He knew what's better,
 Heaven, and the smile of his own conscience!
 What have I done?

Ant. Given cause of scandal, daughter.

Mari. How?

Ant. By a preference, so mark'd, it drew
 The eyes of all upon you.

Mari. Evil eyes,
 To see defect in frank and open deeds!
 The gentleman appear'd mine old acquaintance—
 That drew me towards him:—I discover'd now
 He was my countryman—that makes allies
 Of even foes that meet in foreign lands,
 Then well may couple strangers!—He discoursed
 Of my dear native country, till its peaks
 Began, methought, to cleave the sky, as there
 They stood before me!—I was happy—pleased
 With him that made me so—With what a straw
 You raise a conflagration!

Ant. You forget
 You are not now the commissary's ward,
 But consort to the duke of Mantua.—
 You're a changed woman.

Mari. No, i' faith, the same!
 My skin is not of other texture—This,
 My hand, is just the hand I knew before!
 If my glass tells the truth, the face and form
 I have to-day, I had to-day last year!
 My mind is not an inch the taller grown
 Than mellowing time hath made it in his course!
 And, for my heart—it beats not in my breast,
 If in the ducal chair of Mantua,
 'Tis not the same I had, when I did sit
 On some wild turret of my native hills,
 And burn with love and gratitude to Heaven
 That made a land so fair, and me its daughter!

Ant. Hear me !—You have wrong'd your lord !

Mari. I have wrong'd my lord !

How have I wrong'd my lord ?

Ant. By entertaining
With mark'd and special preference, a man
Until to-day a perfect stranger to you.

Mari. Go on !

Ant. He is a libertine !

Mari. Go on !

Ant. A woman who has such a friend, has nought
To do with honest men !

Mari. Go on !

Ant. A wife

Has done with friends !—Her heart, had it the room
Of twenty hearts, her husband ought to fill,—
A friend that leaves not space for other friends,
Save such as nature's earliest warrant have
To house there !

Mari. You are right in that ! Go on.

Ant. A court's a place where men have need to watch
Their acts and words not only, but their looks ;
For prying eyes beset them round about,
That wait on aught but thoughts of charity.
What were thy words I know not ; but thy acts
Have been the comment of the court to-day ;
Of eyes that gaped with marvel—groups that stood
Gazing upon thee—leaning ears to lips,
Whose whispers, were their import known to thee,
Had stunn'd thee worse than thunder !

Mari. So ! Go on.

Ant. What if they reach thy consort ?

Mari. What !

Ant. Ay, What ?

Mari. He'll spurn them as he ought ; as I do spurn them.
For shame ! for shame ! Me thou shouldst not affront,
But rather those who basely question me !
Father, the heart of innocence is bold !
Tell me how comes your court to harbour one
Whom I should blush to speak to ? If its pride
Be not the bearing that looks down on vice,
What right has it to hold its head so high ?
Endure, at court, what, from our cottage door,
My father would have spurn'd !—If that's your court,
I'll be nor slave nor mistress of your court !
Father, no more ! E'en from thy reverend lips
I will not hear what I've no right to list to !
What !—taint my lord with question of my truth !
Could he who proved my love on grounds so broad,
As I have given my lord ; on grounds so mean
Descend to harbour question of my love—
Though broke my heart in the disseverment,
He were no longer lord or aught of mine !

Father, no more! I will not hear thee! Frown—
Heaven does not frown!—To Heaven I turn from thee.

[*Goes out.*]

Ant. This confidence offends me.—Swerving virtue
Endureth not rebuke! while that, that's steadfast,
With smiling patience suns the doubt away,
Wherewith mistrust would cloud it! 'Tis not right—
An eye so firm-resentful—speech so lofty—

MARIANA enters unperceived, and kneels to him.

An air of such defiance—

Mari. Father!

Ant. Daughter!

Mari. I am thy daughter! O my father, bless me!
Were I the best, I were not 'bove thy charity,
Were I the worst, I should not be beneath it!

Ant. Thou hast my blessing.

Mari. Ere I break my fast
To-morrow, father, I'll confess to thee,
And thou shalt know how little or how much
I merit what thou givest me! so, good night!

Ant. Good night, fair daughter. Benedicite!

[*They go out severally.*]

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Street.*

Enter BARTOLO, BERNARDO, CARLO, *and others.*

Bar. Hush, signors! speak softly! 'Tis treason, and we
may be hanged for it.—So the matter stands! The young
duchess, I fear me, is an old sinner—and what a saint she
looked! Let no man marry a wife who looks like a saint.
Please Providence, mine shall be as ill-favoured as Satan!

Ber. 'Tis the way to make sure of a wife.

Bar. It is, signor. Such is the value of beauty. Let any
man take his own case. Now myself, for instance—How
many a scrape should I have avoided; had I been born as ill-
favoured as some people! He is the happiest man, be
assured, whom no one has reason to envy.—Now, thou art a
happy man, Bernardo.

Ber. I thank you, Signor Bartolo.

Car. But when happened this?

Bar. I told you it happened about half an hour ago.

Ber. Prithee, signor, tell it us again?

Bar. Well then, draw near ; but remember you are sworn to secrecy.

All. We are, we are !

Bar. You know I am fond of the news—though I have as little curiosity as any man. Well, where can one get news if not at the palace ? So, to the palace I went this morning, as I do every morning.—Few persons have constant admittance at the palace, as I have, for they are people of discretion at the palace, and suffer not rogues that come peeping and prying—spies and blabbers—scoundrels of no trust or honesty—but I have admittance to the palace, for they know me.

Ber. Well !

Bar. When I entered it, all was confusion ! One running this way, another that way. One whispering this person, and every one with wonder in his looks ! I warrant you I did not look the figure of wonder too !

Car. Go on, good Bartolo.

Bar. Well : I happen to have a friend or two at the palace—Lucky for me that I have so—There is no doing anything there without a friend.—“Would that such a one was here,” said I to myself ; and scarce had I said it, when in runs the very man I was thinking of.

Ber. Excellent !

Bar. Just in the nick of time, or I verily believe I should have died of wonder. At the same time, every one knows I am the least curious man in all Mantua. Well, in runs my friend, just in the nick of time.—“The matter ?” cried I. “Treason,” whispered he, “but I dare not breathe it for my life.”—“What is it ?” said I ; “I’ll be as mute as the marble under my feet.”—“You shall hear it,” cried he, “for you are a lad of discretion, and have a guard upon your tongue.” You see, signors, that I have a character at the palace !

Ber. Go on, Bartolo.

Bar. Well ! as I told you before, the substance was this—and nothing more nor less. Julian St. Pierre, who has lately returned to the court, and for his wild practices would have been dismissed from it many a year ago, but for the favour of the duke Ferrardo,—this Julian St. Pierre, I say, was half an hour ago discovered stealing from the ante-room that leads to the duchess’s chamber, and secured upon the spot.

Ber. and Carlo. Go on !

Bar. I have no more to tell you—You know as much as I do.—But be discreet ! A silent tongue betokens a wise head ! I cannot stay with you longer. I have some friends in the next street to see ; others in the street beyond !—more again, in the street beyond that ! I know not how many I have to see ! I have the whole city to see. Now be discreet !—remember I got it as I give it, on promise of secrecy—Be discreet !—discovered half an hour ago, stealing from the ante-room that leads to the duchess’s chamber !—Be discreet, I say—A silent tongue, a wise head !—Be discreet—Be discreet !

[*They go out severally.*]

SCENE II.—*Ante-Room, leading to the Duchess's Apartment.**Enter MARIANA.*

Mari. Or I have had sweet dreams, whose fleeting forms
 Have but the charm of their fair visit left;
 Or by my couch hath some good angel watch'd,
 And on my lapsed unconscious spirit breathed
 The balmy fragrance of his heavenly presence;
 So light my heart, as it were clad with wings
 And floated in the sun! My lord—My lord!—
 How is this? 'Tis strange! At thought of my dear lord,
 My soaring heart hath dropp'd at once to earth.
 It is the incidents of yesternight
 The thought of him recalls!—I feel as though
 I fear'd my lord!—Or is't the world I fear?
 The world which yesternight I dared defy;
 But now begin to think upon its snares,
 And feel, as they beset me round, so thick,
 I cannot step, but in their fatal mesh,
 I'm straight entangled! Wherefore feel I thus?
 My heart as heavy as, just now, 'twas light!

Enter ANTONIO.

My confessor! Here's comfort! Welcome, father.—
 For mercy's sake what's this? I welcome thee,
 And thou, to me, giv'st aught, but an all hail!
 Why what's the matter?—Can I be awake?
 Father, I need kind looks and words to-day,—
 My heart is sick!—O earth, how sick! I look'd
 For thee to bring me peace—Alack—Alack!
 Why do your eyes of mercy turn to swords?
 Only they pierce where feeling is more quick!
 Father, be pitiful! 'Tis not the proud
 And forward wife that braved thee, yesternight;
 But thy repentant child that kneels to thee!

Ant. Repentance is a grace—but it is one
 That grows upon deformity—fair child
 To an unsightly mother!—Nor, indeed,
 Always a grace!—'Tis oftentimes—too oft—
 The bootless terror of the stranded soul,
 When ebbing passion leaves it all alone,
 Upon the bleak and dreary shoal of sin!—
 So is't of different kinds—Which kind is thine?

Mari. Father!*Ant.* Thy lord!—Thy lord!*Mari.* What of my lord?

Ant. Nay, rather answer thou, what of thy lord?
 I know that he is duke of Mantua,
 Noble and, fair, and good!—hath high allies!—
 Heads the proud war, in wisdom, as in arms,
 The foremost plume of the van!—and, crown of all,

I know he thinks himself, of every wish
Which heaves that breast of thine, the paramount,
The happy lord!

Mari. He *thinks* himself—

Ant. And presses

The 'larum-curtain'd couch of restless war,
In hopes to change it for that downy one
Whereon he left, as he imagined, safe,
His dearest honour, by thy side reposing,—
And little dreams that stain has reach'd it there!

Mari. That stain has reach'd it there!

Ant. You slept alone

Last night?

Mari. I slept alone?—Yes, Father! Slept alone!

What idle words are these?—I slept alone?
I know I slept alone last night!—the night
Before!—the night preceding that!—alone?
How could I otherwise than sleep alone,
When my dear lord's away?

Ant. Thou lookest——

Mari. How?

Ant. And speakest——

Mari. How?—How do I look and speak?

Ant. Like innocence.

Mari. Doubt'st thou my innocence?

Ant. They say,

Thou didst not sleep alone!

Mari. Who say so?

Ant. All

The palace.

Mari. They!——I cannot speak the word,
Which indicates the acting of a part,
Unparallel'd in shame!

Ant. Another part,

The which involves a tenfold deeper shame,
Men freely name, and lay to thy account!

Mari. Art thou my friend?

Ant. Hast thou not proved me so?

Mari. I have! Forgive me that I question'd thee!

But when I know my heart's supreme content
In its own clearness—not as to act alone,
But wish; nor wish, alone, but thought of sin;
When I know this, and think of yesternight;
And, worse than yesternight, turns out to-day,
I 'gin to think the world is made of hate,
And doubt if thou—e'en thou!—art not my foe!
Oh, do not be my foe! indeed—indeed
The helpless maid that hung upon thy robe
To beg protection, and received it there;
Unchanged in all—save that she's now a wife,
And, as a wife, more bound than e'er to Heaven—
In strait more piteous than she knelt in then,

Clings, kneeling to it now ! What's said of me ?
And on what ground ?—for not the robe I hold
Less conscious is of ground for foul report,
Than I am !

Ant. Left thy chamber any one
This morning, whom thy honour should forbid
To cross its threshold ?

Mari. No !

Ant. Art thou sure ? 'Tis said
There did—The man was seen !

Mari. The man ?

Ant. The man !

Departing from this ante-chamber !—this,
Which none except thy lord, myself, and those
Who wait upon thy person, may frequent.

Mari. Who was the man ?

Ant. Seen in the very act
Of slinking from your door !

Mari. Who was the man ?

Ant. The same that, last night, held thee in discourse !

Mari. I am lost !

Ant. You're lost ?

Enter FERRARDO, LORENZO, COSMO, and others.

Fer. Your highness, with your leave,
We'll pass into your chamber.

[FERRARDO and LORENZO pass in, the others remain.]

Ant. You are lost !

Mari. I'm lost—but I am innocent !

Fer. *[Returning with LORENZO.]* My lords,
You know who owns this scarf ?

Cos. It is St. Pierre's !

Fer. 'Twas found beneath the couch—our advocate
Of state it was that saw it there. Are ye satisfied ?

Cos. We are, your grace ; but would 'twere otherwise.

Ant. Find earth where grows no weed, and you may find
A heart wherein no error grows. I thought
Thy heart without one—thought it was a garden
So thickly set with flowers, no weed had room
To shoot there ! Who would sin, who knew how shame
Confounds the trespasser ! I cannot stay,—
My tears be vouchers for me that I loved her,
And fain would doubt the lapse I must allow. *[Goes out.]*

Fer. My worthy friends, follow the confessor.
I wish to speak in private with her highness.

[LORENZO, COSMO, and LORDS, go out.]

I am your friend !—You are accused of treason,—
The grounds against you are conclusive ones ;
Your judges will be those who will not spare !
And soon and summary will be your trial ;
The penalty of your offence is death !
You are now a prisoner—I pity you—

Would save you !—Will !—As soon as dusk sets in,
 In a convenient spot without the town,
 To which in secret you shall be convey'd,
 I shall have horses waiting—

[*MARIANA shrieks and starts up from her knee, on which she had remained in a state of mental stupefaction.*

Hush !

Mari. For flight ?

Fer. For flight !—By dawn you shall be far away
 From Mantua.

Mari. At dusk ?

Fer. At dusk. As soon
 As dusk begins to fall, expect me here,
 And thou shalt have supply of gold enough
 To pay the charges of thy journey—yea,
 Maintain thee in abundance where thou wilt.

Mari. I may depend upon thee ?

Fer. Fear me not.
 Remember now—At dusk.

Mari. I will !—At dusk.

[*They go out severally.*

SCENE III.—*Another Chamber in the Palace.*

Enter FERRARDO.

Fer. His heart is in my power as 'twere a thing,
 Which in my hand I held and I could crush
 With a grasp ! Nor can it 'scape my power ! her name—
 That flower of woman's pride, which ta'en away,
 From a bright paragon she turns a thing
 For basest eyes to look askant upon—
 Is blasted past the power of friend or lover
 To bring it to its pristine hue again.
 Now for St. Pierre—He also must, to-night,
 Take leave of Mantua. [*Unlocks door.*] Come forth, my friend !

Enter St. PIERRE.

Dost thou not know me ? What an air is this ?
 A king could not a loftier assume
 At high offence ! 'Twas thus with thee last night.
 Nothing but moody looks, until the count
 With much persuasion woo'd you to our feast.
 I wonder'd at thee !

St. P. Are we alone ?

Fer. How's this ?

St. P. Are we alone ?—Where are the craven minions
 That overpower'd me in the corridor,
 And at thy bidding dragg'd me hither ?

Fer. Pshaw!

Art thou no wiser than to heed them? know'st not
'Twas done on my instruction—mine—thy friend's?

St. P. Are we alone?

Fer. We are alone.

St. P. Art sure
That door is unattended? that no minions
Watch it without?

Fer. I am.

St. P. Wilt lock it?

Fer. [*Locking it and returning.*] There!

St. P. [*Springing upon him.*] Villain!

Fer. What means this violence?

St. P. You struck me!

When I contended with the recreants—
Who smite this moment what the one before
They fawn'd upon!—across their arms you struck,
And fell'd me with the blow!—Now take it back!

Fer. Stop! you'll repent it if you strike!

St. P. I tell thee,

I ne'er received a blow from mortal man
But 'twas return'd with interest!—One by one
I have parted—thanks to thee!—with all those virtues
Which wise and holy men inculcate! Not
One grace I now am master of, save one
That ever was my own! That single grace
Remains—the growth of nature—the true shoot
Abuse could not eradicate, and leave
The trunk and root alive!—that virtue—manhood!
Still lives, within my heart, disdain of threat,
Defiance of aggression, and revenge
For contumely.—Come!—You struck me!—Come!
I must have blow for blow!

Fer. [*Drawing his dagger.*] Let fall thy hand
Upon my person—lo, my dagger's free,
And I shall sheathe it in thy heart!

St. P. I care not,
So I die quits with thee!

Fer. I would not kill thee,
So don't advance thy hand! Nay, listen first,
And then, if thou wilt, strike me!—Strike!—abuse
Thy friend, who, when he struck thee, was thy friend
As much as he is now, or ever was;
Who struck thee, but that he might seem thy foe,
To hide how much, indeed, he was thy friend!
Nay, if the lack of quittance for a blow
Which but in show was one—for the intent
Establishes the act—must make us foes,
My dagger's up!—Now give a blow, indeed,
For one that seem'd but one.

St. P. I take't, in thought,
And let thy person unprofaned go!

Fer. No animal, so wild, it will not tame,
 Save man ! Come, calm thyself !—Sit down !—As yet
 Thou know'st not whether to caress thy friend
 Or tear him ! Shouldst thou tear him ? Come, sit down.
 There's not a man in Italy save thee
 Would fret, and he the master, all at once,
 Of good ten thousand ducats ! Still a brow !
 Odd's man, be merry !—Rub thy hands and laugh !
 Thou art rich !—look there ! *[Showing a casket.]*

St. P. How came I yesternight
 To sleep in the chamber of the duke ? And why
 This morning when I left the ante-room
 Was I assaulted by thy minions ?

Fer. Pshaw !
 Enough, thou slepst where thou didst sleep, next chamber
 To the duke's wife, and thereby madest thy fortune.
 For every ducat of the sum I named
 Is thine—but render me one service more !

St. P. Name it.

Fer. Just write for me in boasting vein,
 Confession thou didst pillow yesternight
 There, where the honour of the duke forbids
 That head save his should lie.

Why do you gaze ? 'Tis easily done !

St. P. It is.

Fer. It takes but pen and ink, and here they are ;
 Make use of time ! The hour that is not used
 Is lost, and might have been the luckiest,
 Converted to account. What ponder'st thou ?

St. P. The manner best to execute thy wish.
 I'm hardly in the vein ! 'Twould put me into't
 Wouldst thou relate the means whereby I came
 To lie in the duke's chamber ?

Fer. 'Twould retard thee !

St. P. No ! It will rather help me. When I write,
 Ofttimes I miss the thought, too much intent
 On finding it,—looking at something else,
 Lo, there it stands before me of itself !

How came I in the chamber of the duke ?

Fer. You supp'd, you may remember, with the count
 And me ?

St. P. I do.

Fer. 'Twas plann'd between us.

St. P. Well ?

Fer. And for our end we kept the revel up—
 I mean the count and I—for, as I said
 Before, thou wast not in the joyous vein,—
 Till all the palace had retired to rest.

St. P. My lord, may't please you stop—My thought has
 come. *[Writes.]*

A fair commencement ! excellent ! most fair !
 You see how much you help me !—There !—Go on !

You revell'd till the palace was at rest—
What then ?

Fer. Why, then, finding thee jealous still
Of the kindly grape, we drugg'd your cup ; and, when
The potion work'd, convey'd you in your sleep,—
To sound or stir, profound as that of death,—
Into the chamber of the duke—of the key
Of which I keep a duplicate—and there
We laid you in his bed.

St. P. Break off again

[*Writes.*

While I go on!—You see, my lord, how great
A help you are to me ! It comes as fast
As though I were inditing what your grace
Rehearses to me.—So!—Most excellent !
And now proceed again !

Fer. Where left I off ?

St. P. How can I tell, intent on what's on hand,
I list to you ; but 'tis abstractedly,
A man will sing and work ; but more he heeds
His work than song !—And yet I think, your grace,
When you left off, was putting me—somewhere—
To bed—

Fer. You're right !—in the duke's bed ! Thou slepst there,
With a partition, only, 'twixt his wife
And thee—and that made frailer by a door,—
The lock of which I from its use absolved ;
And casting, 'neath her highness' couch, thy scarf,
As proof of closer neighbourhood to her,
Withdrew to feast on foretaste of revenge.

St. P. Enough !

Fer. Enough ?

St. P. Tut, tut ! I only meant
Your highness to break off, while I resume.
My thoughts flow on, again—Better and better !
Your grace,—a hundred ducats, I have done
Almost as soon as you—[*Writes and stops, again.*—Go on—
What end

Proposed your highness to yourself by this ?

Fer. To blast her name, and in the death of that
Involve my cousin's life ! Accordingly,
By my direction wert thou watch'd and seized,
And hither brought, as partner in a crime,
Whose penalty is death !—which thou shalt 'scape !—
'Scape with enriched life—so ne'er again
Thou show'st thy face in Mantua, and keep'st
Thy counsel.

St. P. [*Writing.*] Have you done ?

Fer. I have.

St. P. And so

Have I. [*Peruses the writing.*] A fair commencement ! better
far

Continuation ! and the winding up

The fairest of the whole ! Howe'er, of that
Your highness must be judge. [*Hands the writing, but suddenly*
checks himself.] 'Sdeath ! here's a word

I did not mean to write, for one I wanted !

I needs must take it out,—I pray your highness

Lend me a knife.

Fer. I have not one.

St. P. Well then

Your dagger—if the edge of it is sharp.

Fer. There 'tis.

St. P. And there is the confession, duke ;

Sign it.

Fer. Why this is my confession !

St. P. Ay !

Indeed ! your highness.

Fer. Word for word.

St. P. You'll own

I'm something of a clerk—I hardly hoped

It would have pleased your highness ! My lord duke,

Sign the confession !

Fer. Why ?

St. P. It pleases me.

If that contents thee not, I'm in thy power,

And I'd have thee in mine ! Your highness sees

I'm frank with you.

Fer. Can it be you, St. Pierre ?

St. P. No—It is you !—and not the peasant lad,

Whom fifteen years ago, in evil hour,

You chanced to cross upon his native hills,—

In whose quick eye you saw the subtle spirit

Which suited you, and tempted it ; who took

Your hint, and follow'd you to Mantua

Without his father's knowledge—his old father !

Who, thinking that he had a prop in him

Man could not rob him of, and Heaven would spare ;

Bless'd him one night, ere he laid down to sleep,

And waking in the morning found him gone !

[*FERRARDO attempts to rise.*]

Move not, or I shall move !—You know me !

Fer. Nay,

I'll keep my seat. St. Pierre, I train'd thee like

A cavalier !

St. P. You did—You gave me masters,

And their instructions quickly I took up

As they could lay them down ! I got the start

Of my contemporaries !—not a youth

Of whom could read, write, speak, command a weapon,

Or rule a horse, with me !—You gave me all—

All the equipments of a man of honour,—

But soon you found a use for me, and made

A slave, a profligate, and pander of me ! [*FERRARDO about to rise.*]

I charge you keep your seat !

Fer. You see I do!

St. Pierre, be reasonable!—you forget.

There are ten thousand ducats.

St. P. Give me, duke,

The eyes that look'd upon my father's face!

The hands that help'd my father to his wish!

The feet that flew to do my father's will!

The heart that bounded at my father's voice!

And say that Mantua were built of ducats,

And I could be its duke at cost of these,

I would not give them for it! Mark me, duke!

I saw a new-made grave in Mantua,

And on the head-stone read my father's name:—

To seek me, doubtless, hither he had come—

To seek the child that had deserted him—

And died here, ere I knew it. Heaven, alone,

Can tell how far he stray'd in search of me!

Upon that grave I knelt an alter'd man;

And rising thence, I fled, nor had return'd,

But tyrant hunger drove me back again

To thee—to thee!—My body to relieve

At cost of my dear soul! I have done thy work,

Do mine! and sign me that confession straight.

I'm in thy power, and I'll have thee in mine!

Fer. Art thou indeed in earnest?

St. P. Look in my eyes.

Fer. St. Pierre, perhaps I have underpaid thee?

St. P. Sign!

Fer. I'll double the amount!

St. P. Come, sign!

Fer. St. Pierre,

Will forty thousand ducats please thee?

St. P. There's

The dial, and the sun is shining on it—

The shadow on the very point of twelve—

My case is desperate! Your signature

Of moment is most vital to my peace!

My eye is on the dial! Pass the shadow

The point of noon, the breadth of but a hair

As can my eye discern—and, that unsign'd,

The steel is in thy heart—I speak no more!

Fer. Saint Pierre!—Not speak—Saint Pierre!

St. P. Is it sign'd?

Fer. [*Writing hurriedly.*] It is.

St. P. Your signet, as a proof that I'm at large.

Now take my station in that closet—No

Attempt at an alarm—In, in, I say!

Hold wind we'll make the port.

[*Opens the chamber-door—seems to recognise some one without, makes a profound bow, as though to the duke.*

I thank your highness!

[*Goes out.*

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE THE LAST.—*A Tent.**LEONARDO and Soldiers discovered.*

Leon. Indeed, a glorious close ! Our brief campaign
 Has pass'd like sport upon a summer's day,
 Without a cloud—a game, where fortune lay
 All on one lucky side—and that was ours !
 Give order for the striking of our tents
 At earliest dawn—I'll but salute the sun,
 And straight for Mantua ! *[Soldiers go out.]*

O sweet the sight
 Of his dear native land to him, who brings
 A brow, with honours laden, back to it !
 Dear Mantua, that twice has given me life ;
 Once in the breath which first I drew in it,
 Now in the gift, without the having which
 That breath were given in vain ! How does my wife ?
 Bright crown of my bright fortunes ! O, my heart—
 How does my love ?—The plume of victory
 Though won, I wear not till I see it nod
 In the bright mirror of her glistening eye.
 When shall that be ?—To-morrow ?—Blest to-morrow !
 Would—would thou wast to-day !

Enter Second Officer.

Officer. Your cousin, and the nobles who compose
 Your highness' council, with your confessor,
 And advocate of state, attend without—in haste, and new
 From Mantua.

Leon. The tidings of our truce
 Can scarce have reach'd them, yet ? Bad news flies quick,
 I deem'd not good could boast so swift a wing.
 Admit them.

Enter FERRARDO, FLORIO, ANTONIO, LORENZO, and Nobles.

Welcome, cousin—Welcome, all !
 Note of our victory, I see, has reach'd you ;
 And ye are come to give me greeting, which
 I gladly should have journey'd to receive.
 But where's my duchess ? She had been, methinks,
 A fair addition to your cavalcade—
 You might have brought her with you.

[To FERRARDO, who drops his eyes.]

Strangers yet !—
 Nay, then, the fault, I'm positive, is yours.
 Had but you dropp'd a hint of your intent,
 Given but a glance of invitation to her ;
 She would have ta'en it, as from a thoughtful friend,

Given you her hand, and thank'd you for the leave
To bear you company.

Fer. Your highness' pardon;
A man can't help his doubts, e'en if he would;
And I have grounds, and solid ones, for mine.

Leon. Fie, fie, offend in any other thing,
And ere you ask you're pardon'd! Here are friends—
Friends of my love's and mine—tried friends!—and, yet,
Not friends in this—to leave my wife behind,
Who loves me best; when they, in zeal of love
Are here to give me joy of my high fortune.
How does my lady, friend? [*To LOR.*] How does she, father?
Why comes she not to greet me? You should be
Her harbingers—a step or two before?
Or bring ye charge from her to expedite
My long'd return to Mantua? as if
My heart were not remembrancer enough!
For never speed me, Heaven, if life seems life,
Until I stand in her sweet sight again.

Why whisper ye?

[*FERRARDO and FLORIO whisper.*
ANTONIO and LORENZO whisper.]

And ye do whisper, too—

Hah! By your looks, I noted not before,
Ye come to tell me of disaster!—Speak!
The sum on't? Is it heavy?—What is it?
Come, name me the amount! Is it my dukedom?
Or what?—'Tis nothing of my wife?—Say that—
And say ought else which stern misfortune wills!
Blow wind! mount wave!—No rock to shut me thence,
I see the strand to run my bark ashore,
And smile upon my shipwreck.

Fer. 'Tis of her
We come to speak.

Leon. 'Tis no mishap to her—
For you appear to speak in wrath, not grief.
If what you come to say affects reproach—
Reproach of her! speak out!—Speak ye the truth,
Ye cannot speak in anger!

Fer. That our duty
Permitted us to leave you in that mind!
Leon. Pshaw! do thy duty!—be it duty—'Tis
Beyond your power of other mind to make me.

Fer. Thy lady is false to thee.

Leon. [*Drawing.*] Thy tongue is false
To thee!—It puts thy life in jeopardy;
Recall thy words or die!

Florio. My gracious liege,
He speaks the truth!

Leon. Thou too!

Lor. Your highness' patience.
What speaks your cousin, fain would I deny,
But cannot.

Leon. Sirs! I only doubt which way
To point my sword!

Ant. Your highness—

Leon. What say'st thou?
Speak out, thou reverend man!—There only wants
Thy charitable tongue, to prove how prone
Are mankind to allege defect, where e'en
The shadow on't was never seen before!
Say on!—Yet, ere thou speak'st convince thyself
That she, who loved me, when a noteless man;
And loved me still, when she believed me lost;
And loved me on, when woo'd by rank and wealth;
And, ere she'd yield to their enforced suit,
Was ready to become the bride of death!—
Convince thyself, I say, that finding me—
Finding me still returning love for love,
With rank, revenues, that she dream'd not of;
And wedded to me, mistress of my all,
This moment—Yet the very next, she swerved
And cast herself, and me, and all away!
Impossible!—Unimaginable! Now,
Say on and shame thyself!

Ant. My gracious liege,
Restrain your ire at what you would not hear,
And audience give to what you ought to hear.
If facts, avouch'd by eyes, may be believed,
I say, that would not say it—thou art wrong'd!
Peruse that paper—There you have our grounds
For saying what we say.

Lor. O read, my liege!
Think, 'tis our duty speaks, and what it says,
Says at the cost of our unfeign'd love,—
Which, sooner than mischance should undermine
Thy towering happiness, would be itself
The seaward mole, to meet the rushing wave
And break its fury ere it bursts on thee!
But wind and tide together setting in
Will, sometimes, overwhelm all obstacles—
So needs must fall this heavy surge on thee
Which we let o'er, in drowning.

Leon. I read it, sir,
Not that I do fear it—or give credence to it.
Fer. Your highness sees how hinges fact on fact.

Leon. No!—I see nothing!

Fer. Nothing!

Leon. Not a jot
That might not be contrived, and against which
Improbability doth not set its face!
My lord—my lord—you love me not—nor you—
Nor you.—I doubt if any loves me here!
I doubt all things but that my wife is true!
I will to Mantua, this very hour,
To crave her pardon that I listen'd to you.

Fer. My lord, she's fled from Mantua.

Leon. She is what?

Fer. She's fled from Mantua, as also is
Her paramour.

Leon. Recall that word, or else
Thou makest me do a murder! Is she fled?
Cousin, thou murder'st me! Speaks he the truth?
Gainsay him, and I heed not what ye say!
Cousin, thou didst but hear that she was fled,
Thou dost not speak from thine own knowledge?

Fer. Else
I had not spoken.

Leon. Fled?—In company?—

Fer. What else could I infer?

Leon. Thou but infer'st it,
Come then, all's well!—Let her be fled or not,
She has fled perhaps to friends, perhaps to me!

Enter Second Officer, with MARIANA.

Second Officer. My liege, the duchess.

Leon. Ha! I told you so!

Welcome, my loved!—my wrong'd!—my innocent!

Welcome, my loyal wife!

Mari. My liege, stand off!

Embrace me at the peril of your honour!
Your cousin here?—The count?—Your confessor?
And he?—and these the members of your council?
My tongue may spare its labour then! Yet whose
So fit to tell my husband, he's the lord
Of a dishonour'd bed,—as hers, whose heart,—
That ne'er admitted thought of man save him,
Knew not its part that was not given to him,
Before itself as dearer heart set him,
Sun, earth, life, health, desire, knew nought but him,—
Yet could not guard the jewel, paramount,
Of him it loved so well, but by an act—
Without a motive—monstrous to belief—
Which reason unto madness would refer—
Nay doubt that even madness' self could do!
Whom it so loved, did spoil, and bring at once
From proudest wealth to basest penury!

Leon. No!—Thou didst never swerve!—Truth dwells in
thee!

Thou art all radiant with it!

Mari. Not a doubt!

My trusting lord! my loved and honour'd lord!

Leon. [*Endeavouring to raise her.*] Up to my heart!
[*Throws herself at his feet.*]

Mari. No—by thy love!

Leon. I say

I'll have thee up!—Thy place is here!

Mari. [*Preventing him.*] My lord!

What holds that paper?—Tell me, is it not
My accusation? Let me see it. [*Reads.*] True
From first to last.—The fact's not otherwise
Than here set down. Wouldst take me to thy heart,
And this against me?

Leon. Yes!

Mari. Nay, speak again,
And think before you speak! Say that the duke,
Your cousin, loves you not! Say that the count
Still bears you grudge!—Say these, the members of
Your highness' council, are suborn'd by them!—
Here stand two honest men who take their side!
Wouldst take me to thy heart, and this against me?

Leon. I would.

Mari. And if you would, you should not do it!

Leon. 'Tis a plot!

Mari. It is!—

But thou, my lord, must prove it to be one!
Else it hath oped a chasm, 'twixt thee and me,
Which, till thou close it up, or bridge it o'er
With stable-footed truth, that all may trust,
May not be cross'd.—Leap it—and all is lost!

Leon. Canst give me clue to find it out?

Mari. Methinks

I can. Thy cousin counsell'd me to fly,
To 'scape, as he alleged, the penalty
Of my imputed crime,—but, as I thought,
To furnish of that crime conclusive proof!—
Supplied me, too, with ample store of gold!

Leon. Traitor! I see it all—and do not you?
My cousin and my subject though thou art,
To solemn mortal combat I defy thee!
That from thy lips, at point of my true sword,
Admission I extort of an attempt
To slur my lady's honour!—for thy soul
No shriving knows, no healing speech with priest,
Till by confession it heaves off that sin.
Come forth!

Mari. No! no! let me be guilty thought,
But, oh! in peril, place not thou thy life!
Or let me prove, myself, my innocence
By ordeal of poison or of fire.
Do aught but put thy life in jeopardy!

Leon. And she could injure me!

Fer. It is the trick
Of lapsed virtue to affect excess,
Which sound desert would sooner suffer wrong,
Than claim pretension to.

Leon. It is the trick
Of villany to lie! Come forth!

Fer. Lead on!

Mari. [*Embracing his knees.*] My lord! my lord! my husband!

Leon. Loose thine arms!

Mari. It is mine heart-strings hold thee, not mine arms.
Wilt snap them? If thou wilt, thou hast a right,
They are thine own!—but wilt thou use that right?

Leon. Take her away!

Mari. When fails our dearest friend,
There may be refuge with our direst foe. [*Rushing up to FER.*
Oh! why art thou my foe? how lies my peace
Between thy good and thee? Is it thy good
To slay my peace? Wilt thou not look upon me?
Alas! thine eyes are better turn'd away!
For gazing on them, human as they are,
I have a feeling of a heart of stone!
And from my hopeless tears the spirit flies,
That frozen on my lids I feel them hang!
'Thou rock! Affliction, did I plead to thee—
I turn'd from thee, Despair!

Leon. Come forth!

Fer. Lead on!

Enter ST. PIERRE behind.

Mari. No way to hold thee from thy bloody purpose?
Stop!—Thou wilt do a murder! Art thou sure
Thy wife is innocent? Thou know'st not what
Thou go'st to do! Whate'er befalls, the sin
Of all the deed 'tis I must answer for—
The hapless wife that on thy house and thee
Brought ruin!—Have compassion on her soul,
If not upon thy own!—Yet hear me!—Stop—
I'll put an end to all!—I am—

Fer. Guilty!

Mari. No!

To save thy life—my own—and his that's heart
Unto my life—I cannot speak the lie!

Leon. And if thou couldst, I'd not believe thy tongue—
Though Truth's as soon would lie.

Fer. No tongue on earth
Can clear her!—She is false!—To eyes and ears
Convicted!—She is an adultress!

St. P. [*Rushing forward.*] Liar!
She is as true as thou art false!

Fer. A caitiff
That robb'd me once, and put my life in peril—
But I'll be quits with him!

Leon. Prevent him!

[*Several interfere, but not until ST. PIERRE is wounded.*

St. P. Not
Quite home, your grace—yet near, I hope, enough!
Your highness, 'tis a dying man you hear;
Your wife is innocent!

Fer. A poor gallant
That would not say as much!

St. P. Your highness, read
This paper!—Hold his grace!

Fer. 'Twas forced from me.

St. P. Only the signature, my lord—The rest
Was voluntary—word for word, what fell
From his own lips!

Fer. You pass'd the night beside her—
Alone—none near you—within whisper of her!
Find pen to draw 'cross that!

St. P. I pray your highness,
Wears not your wife a little rustic cross,
Carved by no craftsman's hand?

Mari. I do!—the same
I show'd thee when we spoke together.

St. P. 'Twas
Your brother gave it you.

Mari. It was.

St. P. I think,
Some fifteen years ago?

Mari. So many years
Have pass'd since that dear brother gave it me.
I was a child then—he almost a man!

St. P. You woke one morning, did you not, and saw
That brother standing, weeping by your bed:
He bless'd you, put that cross upon your neck,
Kiss'd you, and bade farewell to you, and went—
You never saw him more. Pray you come near!
O God! my mother's face!

Mari. My brother—Ambrose!

St. P. Yes, Mariana!

Fer. It's a masque, your highness,
They've got up to amuse you!

Leon. Hence with him!
The count too! [*Soldiers bear off FERRARDO and Count.*]

Mari. Brother, I said I knew thee! Thou forgott'st
Thy sister's little face to woman's gown;
But I remember'd thine enough to feel
'Twas something once had been familiar-dear!
O that my memory had better kept

What my heart treasured—thou didst prove how well!
Wilt thou not speak to me? Hear'st thou, my brother?

St. P. Our father's cottage, Mariana!

Mari. Ha!
Thou faintest!

St. P. No—it is nothing, sister!
What makes thee look so pale and vanishing?
Don't go from me!—Alas—'tis I am going!
I have confess'd myself! Pray for me, sister!
Mine eyes have lost thee!—But I feel thee still,
That's comfort!—yet—I have thee in my arms—
Thou fadest too from them—fast! fast!—Thou art gone!
[*ST. PIERRE dies.*]

EPILOGUE,

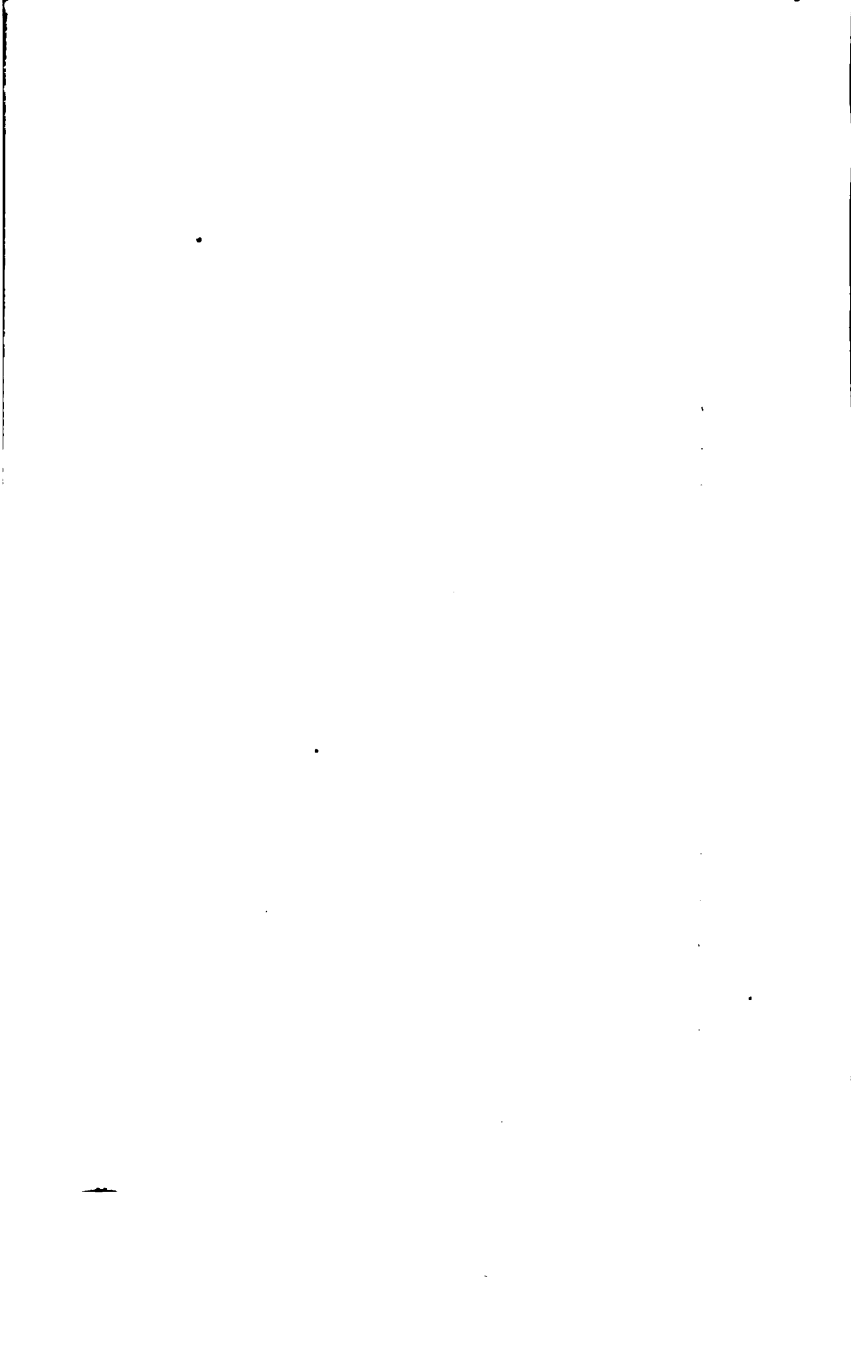
WRITTEN BY CHARLES LAMB.

SPOKEN BY MISS ELLEN TREE.

WHEN first our Bard his simple will express'd,
That I should in his Heroine's robes be dress'd,
My fears were with my vanity at strife,
How I could act that untried part—a "Wife."
But Fancy to the Grison hills me drew,
Where Mariana like a wild flower grew,
Nursing her garden-kindred : so far I
Liked her condition, willing to comply
With that sweet single life : when, with a cranch,
Down came that thundering, crashing avalanche,
Startling my mountain-project ! "Take this spade,"
Said Fancy, then ; "dig low, adventurous Maid,
For hidden wealth." I did ; and, Ladies, lo !
Was e'er romantic female's fortune so,
To dig a life-warm lover from the—snow ? }

A wife and Princess see me next, beset
With subtle toils, in an Italian net ;
While knavish Courtiers, stung with rage or fear,
Distill'd lip-poison in a husband's ear.
I ponder'd on the boiling Southern vein ;
Racks, cords, stilettoes, rush'd upon my brain !
By poor, good, weak Antonio, too, disown'd—
I dream'd each night, I should be Desdemona'd :
And, being in Mantua, thought upon the shop
Whence fair Verona's youth his breath did stop :
And what, if Leonardo, in foul scorn,
Some lean Apothecary should suborn
To take my hated life ? A "tortoise" hung
Before my eyes, and in my ears scaled "alligators" rung.
But *my* Othello, to his vows more zealous—
Twenty Iagos could not make *him* jealous !

New raised to reputation, and to life—
At your commands behold me, without strife,
Well pleased, and ready to repeat "The Wife." }



THE
BEGGAR OF BETHNAL GREEN:

A COMEDY.—IN THREE ACTS.

ALTERED FROM THE BEGGAR'S DAUGHTER OF BETHNAL GREEN.

DEDICATED
TO KIRKMAN FINLAY, ESQ.

BY HIS MUCH-INDEBTED SERVANT,

JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES.

1834.

CHARACTERS.

(AS PERFORMED AT THE VICTORIA THEATRE IN 1834.)

<i>Queen Elizabeth</i>	Mrs. EGERTON.
<i>Emma</i>	Mrs. OMAN HILL.
<i>Kate</i>	Miss P. HORTON.
<i>Bess</i>	Miss JARMAN.
<i>Mrs. Trusty</i>	Mrs. GARRICK.
<i>Lord Woodville</i>	Mr. DOYNE.
<i>Lord Thomas Willoughby</i>	Mr. DEBAR.
<i>Lord Wilford</i>	Mr. SHERIDAN KNOWLES.
<i>Belmont</i>	Mr. SELBY.
<i>Lord Mayor of London</i>	Mr. T. LEE.
<i>Albert</i>	Mr. WYNNE.
<i>Old Small</i>	Mr. WILLIAMS.
<i>Young Small</i>	Mr. ABBOTT.
<i>Peter</i>	Mr. LATHAM.
<i>Ralph</i>	Mr. FORRESTER.
<i>Strap</i>	Mr. CHIPPENDALE.
<i>Chaplain</i>	Mr. MILDENHALL.
<i>Officer</i>	Mr. WILLOUGHBY.
<i>First Citizen</i>	Mr. YOUNG.
<i>Second Citizen</i>	Mr. KERRIDGE.

THE
BEGGAR OF BETHNAL GREEN.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*St. Paul's.*

Enter BELMONT and WILFORD, disguised as Yeomen.

Bel. Now, Wilford, still thy comrade when at school
Or college; when 'twas peace, thy playfellow,
Thy right-hand man in war; I'm by thee still
In simple guise of honest yeoman's son,
To do the bidding of thy fantasy.
What is't?—Why are we thus attired?—What road
Are we to take? on what adventure bound?
The argument wilt thou unfold to me
Of this romance which thus we now begin?
I see thy cheek is pale—thine eye, without
The gladsome light that speaks a heart at rest;
Still, to my questioning, answerest thou:—
“Come, don a yeoman's coat and roam with me.”—
Thy wish is done—Do mine. Unbosom thee,
For till I find thy heart, I lack my own.

Wilf. Remember'st, Belmont, what thou saidst to me,
When such, or such, if e'er I took a wife,
I said should be the 'haviour of my bride?

Bel. 'Twas this:—“In vain premise or calculate,
How thou shalt fall in love. A fever that!
Which comes upon you, sudden as the plague,
Or intermittent! Love by rule, forsooth!—
Love by philosophy!—Thou shalt be smit
In the twinkling of an eye!—infected by
A touch!—this minute sound as mountain health,
And helpless next, as bed-ridden tenant of
An hospital.” And hast thou proved it so?

Wilf. Attend. Last week, I could not go the length
Of Ludgate Hill, but I must horse it thither.
Returning thence, a motley group of men,
Mechanics, servants, masters, old and young,
Collected round some object, which they seem'd
To gaze with most admiring wonder on,
Attracted me—What think you 'twas? A maid—
A maid attired in costless suit, but neat,
Of humble russet!—such a distance wide

Removed from any child of luxury
 Or wealth, that e'en a simple ribbon knot
 Denied its aid to set her bonnet off,
 Or snowy coif and kerchief! But what wealth
 Had nature rain'd where fortune seem'd to grudge
 The poorest drop of her enriching shower!
 Sight could not take it in!—the tongue would stop
 Ere it could sum it half—all terms of praise
 Too scant to value loveliness so rare!
 At thought of winning it, the heart grow wild,
 As his whom overflowing affluence
 Lifts from the depth of want! There stood the maid,
 Silent and motionless, with eyes on ground,
 Abash'd by the reflection of herself,
 Cast back upon her so on every side
 From mirrors that her charms described, indeed,
 By showing her their power!

Bel. Remark'd she thee?

Wif. She did! My restless courser startled her;
 She raised her eyes; and, lo! they fix'd on mine
 With look, methought, of recognition, that
 I felt as though our very souls embraced,
 And through me ran a thrill unknown before;
 When, spiteful chance! my steed more restive grew,
 Defied command alike of spur or rein,
 And bore me from the maid!

Bel. Ask'd you not who
 She was?

Wif. No.

Bel. No!

Wif. As one in jeopardy
 Will lack possession of himself, nor use
 Some means of succour, at his very hand,
 I did not think of that, till out of reach on't!
 My steed, at length, compell'd—by whom I know not—
 To check his mettle, I dismounted straight
 And hasten'd back on foot—but she was gone!—
 If my first look of her hath been my last,
 I'll never care to look on woman more!

Bel. Thy lot is cast! I told thee, Wilford, so!
 To such conclusion ever comes his work
 Who makes philosophy the rule of love.
 Love knows no rule, and never rule knows less
 Than when obedience we'd exact from it.
 'Tis an uncertain and a froward guest;
 Comes to us when it lists; abides as long
 As pleases it; and its own humour takes,
 Whatever may be ours! You'd go in quest on't—
 And lo! 'tis with you before setting out;
 You'd lay down terms for its sojourning with you—
 And here it is on its own terms at home;
 You'd fain be rid on't, and 'tis fain to stay;

You'd thrust it out of doors, and only find
The threshold's not your own, the moment love
Sets foot within it. Mean'st to seek this maid?

Wilf. Ay, through the world!

Bel. I'll help thee in the search;
And if we find the city holds her not,
As far as Rumford bear me company—
Whither, this week, perforce I must repair—
And thence, where'er thou point'st, will I be thine.

Wilf. Come on! I tell thee, if I find her not,
I'm tenant for the house the sexton builds. [*They go out.*]

SCENE II.—*A Chamber in Old Small's.*

Enter OLD SMALL.

Old S. Who'd have a son—a plague—to drive him mad?
To hunt for, or to watch, from morn till night,
To coax, to scold, and with no better thrift
To-day, than yesterday! A lackwit, caught
By this and that, and held by nothing. Now
At bowls; next hour at cocking; presently
A race, a show, a feast; and, after that,
Perchance a quarrel. Anything but work.
What, Peter! Peter!

Enter PETER.

Peter. Master, here am I.

Old S. Well, Peter, where's my son?

Peter. I could not find him
In all Whitechapel, seek him where I would.
I call'd in at the Cock, he wasn't there;
The Fox and Geese, but came no better speed;
The Fountain was burn'd down last Tuesday night;
The Rising Sun has stopp'd since Lady-day;
The Crown and Mitre swore at me when last
I sought him there, so thither went I not;
The Duke of Buckingham and he are out
E'er since he broke the drunken tapster's pate;
And never goes he to the Loggerheads,
Except o' Sundays.

Old S. Peter! Peter!

Peter. Master?

Old S. I sore mistrust thee, Peter.

Peter. Master! me?

Old S. Ay, by my troth, I do! mistrust thee, sore!
Thou'rt in his secrets! I'll be sworn thou art.
I saw you wink to him, on Sunday last,
At dinner-time. Last Tuesday night, you said,
'Twas only ten when he came in; and not
A minute from the bolting of the door,

"Stop!" cries a snivelling tailor; "Master Small,
 'Tis not your turn to play"—The pair of shears,
 To clip me so, and thus cut up the game!

Old S. Now mark me, Thomas Small; thou'rt twenty-one!
 What art thou master of?

Young S. Of quarter-staff,
 Rackets, and fives.—I'm capital at fives!—
 Hop but the ball, I'm sure to make it fly
 Like bullet from a gun.—I play at bowls
 And quoits.—At quoits I'm famous for a ringer!—
 And then I'll putt the stone with any man.

Old S. Master thou art, I know, of idleness!
 But name to me the craft thou'rt master of.
 Art fit to be a turner?

Young S. Burn the lathe!

Old S. A cooper?

Young S. Sooner I'd be staved to death!

Old S. A smith?

Young S. As lieve you'd hammer out my brains!

Old S. A tailor?

Young S. Slay me with a needle first!

Old S. What then art fit to be?

Young S. A gentleman!

Old S. A gentleman? Thou scarce canst read!

Young S. What then?

That's nothing in a gentleman!

Old S. Thou writ'st—

But such a hand, the clerk's a cunning one
 That makes it out.

Young S. That's like a gentleman!

Old S. Thou canst not cipher. Hand thee in a bill
 Of twenty items, and 'twill puzzle thee
 To add it up.

Young S. That's quite the gentleman!
 Father, thou truly saidst I'm twenty-one,
 And he that's twenty-one by law's a man;
 So I'm a man, and as a man am free.
 I'm master now of handsome twenty pounds,
 Left to me by my godfather; to them
 Add thou what grace thy graciousness may please,
 And, in my own way, let me try the world.

Old S. Thou'rt like a wayward horse that will not break;
 The training thee's all labour, profit none,—
 And thrift of fruitless toil's to give it up.
 Thy will would have thee free before thine age;
 Thine age, like a false friend, now backs thy will;
 Both are too strong for me, and so I yield.
 Wait for me. I'll be with you presently.

[*OLD SMALL goes out.*]

Young S. Does he consent, and am I free indeed!
 New bonds I fear'd to curb me in new rights,
 And he takes off the old.—I thrive apace.

Most hopeful setting out! So fair begun!
Must needs fair ending have!

Peter. You play'd that game
Of loggats passing well.

Young S. I play'd a game—
But not at loggats, Peter. Never more
I'll play at loggats! Peter, nought I've done
But walk, since morning, up and down Cheapside,
Feasting my eyes on ladies of the court
And its precincts, that come to bargain there.
O Peter, homely are the silks they wear
To their more silken looks! A city coif
Hath twice their pride! No tossing of the head;
No turning of the shoulder, in disdain;
But eyes that drop when they your glances catch,
As if to let you gaze! Peter, I'll make
My fortune!

Peter. Prithee, how?

Young S. Now try and guess!

Peter. I could not guess, were I to try a week!

Young S. Peter, thou canst be shrewd. Look at me, Peter;
Scan me from head to foot. Premising, now,
Thou knew'st me not, wouldst take me for the son
Of Gilbert Small, the pin-maker?

Peter. More like
I'd take you for the son of Walter Husk,
The baker, to the east of Aldersgate.

Young S. A baker's son! A crust hath pith, as much
As thou hast wit! Take me for son of him!

Peter. He's tall, and so art thou.

Young S. What's tall?—What's tall?
Pronounce me son unto a barber's pole,
Because 'tis tall! To say a man is tall
Is nothing, Peter! Look at me again,
And guess what way I'll make my fortune. There,—
I fancy that's a leg.

Peter. It is a leg!

Young S. And thereunto's a foot.

Peter. Yea is there, of
A verity!

Young S. Go to! You flatter, now.
You think me vain; but I am not vain, although
I have a leg and foot,—ay, and a face
Moreover!

Peter. Certainly you have a face.
He'd have a face who'd say thou hadst not one.

Young S. Thou hast a wit, good Peter. Show thee but
A thing, thou see'st it.

Enter OLD SMALL unperceived.

Look at my waist!
Now lift your eye a little farther up,

And ponder how my shoulders spread! Dost see?
 Now on the whole—to speak it modestly—
 Taking me altogether, am I not
 A very personable man? Now, Peter,
 How shall I make my fortune?—Why, you fool!
 By love!

Old S. [*Coming forward.*] Who marries thee, loves not
 herself:

She goes a voyage in a fair-weather bark,
 That scuds while wind and current favour it,
 But, in itself, hath no sea-worthiness
 To stand their buffeting! Here, have thy wish;
 Thou'lt find no niggard hand has fill'd that purse.
 I give it thee to feed thy wantonness;
 But, e'en for that, I'd have thee chary on't!
 There's not a piece in it that's not made up
 Of grains of fractions, every one of which
 Was slowly gather'd by thy father's thrift,
 And hoarded by his abstinence! It holds—
 How many minutes, torn from needful sleep!
 How many customary wants, denied!
 How many throbs of doubting—sighs of care,
 Laid out for nothing through thy waywardness!
 But take it with a blessing!—Fare thee well!
 Thou never yet couldst suit thee, Thomas, to
 Thy father's house; but, should there come the time,
 Thou know'st the door, that still was open to thee!

[*OLD SMALL goes out.*]

Young S. Peter, I'll stay at home. The good old man!
 He loves me, Peter! Take him back the purse,
 And say I'll stay at home.

Peter. And keep at home?
 Wait like his ledger on the desk?

Young S. I will!—
 That is—I would.

Peter. And follows, if I could.

Young S. I fear it does.

Peter. What's got, return'd, may not be got again.

Young S. Peter, you counsel like an oracle!

Peter. You've rubb'd your eyes till they are red.

Young S. Indeed?

Peter. Look in the glass!

Young S. A pity not to make

My fortune, Peter! Give me back the purse.
 I'll make my fortune! Go and get my trunk,
 And bring it after me to Cripple-gate.

Thou saidst, as I came in, thy place was lost
 On my account. I'll find for thee a new one. [*PETER goes out.*]
 There's no controlling fate; and fate, I see,
 By love, has destined me to make my fortune.
 So farewell to my father's house! I could
 Be sad at bidding it good-bye—but will not.

I'll think on nought but how we'll meet again,
 When love fulfils what fate decrees for me;
 Bids Thomas Small a golden wedding hail,
 And sends him home a very gentleman!

[YOUNG SMALL goes out.]

SCENE III.—*An Apartment in Albert's House.*

Enter ALBERT and EMMA.

Emma. Why sigh'st thou, Albert?

Al. This has troubled me.
 On Thursday, saidst thou?

Emma. Yes.

Al. I recollect!

I recollect!—Was't not on Ludgate Hill?

Emma. On Ludgate Hill.

Al. It was. I recollect!

She grasp'd my arm, as with the start, methought,
 Of sudden fear, which I accounted for,
 As at the self-same moment heard I near
 The furious prancing of a fiery steed!
 Rode he a steed?

Emma. He did.

Al. Then 'twas for him!

The image, say'st thou, of my likeness, which,
 Before that field, which robb'd me of my sight,
 I gave to thee?

Emma. So said our child.

Al. Where is
 That likeness?

Emma. In her custody. 'Twas that
 Betray'd to me the secret of her heart.
 She pray'd it from me. Of its costly case
 Despoil'd, I gave it her—and wonder'd soon
 To find her, when she thought she was alone,
 All lost in gazing on't, with signs that spoke
 Affection more than filial, getting vent
 In very tears, which, as they fell, her breast
 Uneasy heaving, seem'd with sighs to number!

Al. Such things I've heard.

Emma. What, Albert?

Al. I have heard

That subtle passion from a glance hath sprung,
 And in a moment e'en struck root so deep,
 No art could pluck it out—So! Mark'd she how
 He was attired?

Emma. He seem'd a yeoman.

Al. So!

That hope is quench'd:—of prouder state, this thing
 That seems a weed, had haply proved a flower!

Emma. I prithee, Albert, how?

Al. That brother, who,
Unnatural, my lands confiscate seized,
'Tis said is father to a goodly son,
The very image of his uncle, dead,
As they believe me. Hope just kindled up,
The youth, she saw, might prove that very son.
He seem'd a yeoman? For this malady
We have, perhaps, a medicine—the knowledge of
What she is, which still we've hidden from her.
That she shall know to-morrow.

Emma. Tell it her,
And quit this wayward life. Thou'st laid by store
Enough. Forsake the land which thee forsakes;
Another one makes thee a franchised man,
Far from the ban of this! There mayst thou take
Thy title, in thy own land forfeited,
And for our fair child find befitting mate.

Al. I will not—cannot quit my native land!
Bann'd as I am, 'tis precious to me still!
It is my father's land—'tis loved for that!
'Tis thine—thy child's—it should be loved for you!
It should be loved, if only for itself!
'Tis free, it hath no despot, but its laws!
'Tis independent; it can stand alone!
'Tis mighty 'gainst its enemies—'tis one!
Where can I find the land the like of it?
Its son, though under ban and forfeiture,
Is envied. He's the brother of the free!
No! no! I cannot quit my native land.
For sight of other land I would not give
The feeling of its breath—the wall of him
That does not forfeit it, which none may scale,
However proud, unscathed, to do him wrong!
I cannot—will not—quit my native land!

Emma. Then let us seek some quiet corner on't;
Nor spend on thriftless hope, what, husbanded
By wise content, would keep us more than rich.

Al. Nor can I that. Who sees his house pull'd down,
And does not strive to build it up again?
Who sees his vessel sunk, and does not look
For other hull to plough the waves anew?
I cannot do't! I've lived on the high seas
Of restless life; I would be on them still!
Say I'm unfit for't—I'd be near them still!
The sailor, maim'd or superannuate,
Seeks not an inland home; but near some cliff
His hammock slings, in hearing of the surge
He wot to cleave of yore! Come, lead me forth.
Where's Bess?

Emma. On errand gone to Aldersgate.

Al. I would again she went not forth alone!

My heart hath strange misgivings, touching her.
 Bold men infest our streets, who would not stop,
 By force to take what right refuses them ;
 Like him who late, with his pernicious suit,
 Wounded her tender ear.

Strap [without]. What, ho!

Al. Come in,

Whose challenge sounds unwelcome, yet a friend's.
 Is it not honest Master Strap?

Enter STRAP (intoxicated).

Strap. The same,
 Master of cobbling, as thy shoes allow,
 Which seek his lapstone old, and leave it new—
 But to the matter, as they say.

Al. What is't?

Strap. Why, this it is—a truth as old as time—
 Grief hath this soother, 'tis not solitary,
 But, if 'twill look for't, finds its fellow grief.
 So does the wise man teach. Thou know'st I lost
 My daughter, Sunday week—she did not die.
 Romances drove the giddy vixen mad,
 And she eloped from me. For loss of her,
 I have ne'er been sober since! No comforter
 Like ale—save sack; but sack's for rich men's cares.—
 Your friends!—Says one, "It might have fallen out worse;"
 One, that it might be evil, sent for good;
 One, that the plague itself will have an end;
 And some will pity; some will scold; and some
 Will try to laugh me out of sorrowing.
 As twenty ways there are to mend a shoe
 Besides the soling, heeling, welting on't!

Al. But what is this to us?

Strap. Philosophy!

If not philosophy, a moral, then—
 And if not that, why, then, a hint that thou
 Hast lost thy daughter, just as I lost mine.

Emma. Have lost our daughter!

Strap. With a difference, though—

Al. Nay—

Emma. Prithee, Albert, give him his own way;
 He's sure, at last, to take it; so we lose
 Our time, persuading him to progress ours.—
 Well?

Strap. Well, I said there was a difference,
 But what of that? This road and that road meet—
 Take which you will, you come to the same end.
 It matters not, my daughter, with her will,
 Thine against hers, is gone; since both alike
 Are lost.

Al. How?—Where?—Who forced our child away?

Strap. A gallant, who behemm'd her in the street,

With good a score of lusty followers,
 Flush'd swaggerers, that seem'd of no account
 To reckon lawless deeds! I heard a rout,
 And left my stall. There was she in the midst!
 Some following with outcry 'gainst the deed,
 But none with hand that dared to question it.
 Upon my child I thought, at sight of thine—
 Thought of thy loss mine own brought home to me—
 My brain was swimming, and I rush'd on him
 That held her—but a fillip laid me down!
 Yet, brief as was the scuffle, and the end
 Untoward; profit came of it. This ring
 He wore, though how he left it in my hand
 I know not!

Al. Give it me!—A jewel hath it?
 Yes! 'Tis no common ring. Perhaps a clue
 To trace the ravisher? Give me a sword,
 Get me a knife—a dagger!—anything,
 So that it be a weapon! Wretched man!
 Why don't I ask you first to get me eyes!
 Thought of my heavy wrong, put out the thought
 Of what must help me to revenge my wrong!
 Oh, heavy loss! To have a father's heart—
 To have a father's arm to second it,—
 And both be useless for the lack of sight!
 The queen! The queen!

Strap. Wouldst see the queen? Then straight
 Repair to Temple Bar; to-day begins
 Her Royal Progress; there she's sure to wait,
 The mayor and citizens give her greeting there.

Al. Lead on! My child!—My child!—Whate'er betide,
 This hour will I unfold myself, and find,
 One way or other, period to my cares.
 Knows't thou where dwells a notary on the way?
 Conduct me to him!—On!—We'll meet our death
 Or find our child.—On!—On!—Our child!—Our child!

[*They go out.*]

SCENE IV.—*Temple Bar.*

The Houses on each side adorned with cloths of silk or velvet, gold or silver, hanging from the upper windows.—A crowd of Citizens, men and women, assembled.

Officer. Stand back, sirs! Stand back there, I say!—Why press ye forward?—Back there! back! Keep order till her highness pass.

First Citizen. Will it be long, sir, ere she come?

Officer. To answer that, I must know the measure of your patience. Stretches it to some five minutes hence, I dare warrant you she will be here quickly; for 'tis a good half-

hour beyond the time she appointed to set out from Westminster.

Second Citizen. Is't to Norwich, sir, her highness makes her progress this time? *[Shouts without.]*

Officer. To Norwich 'tis, sir.—Peace! her highness comes. Each keep his place, nor press upon the other; so one and all will see the sight. Here comes the lord mayor, with the aldermen and council, to greet her highness. More room!—Stand back!—Stand back!

Enter the LORD MAYOR, &c. Enter Procession through the Gates; Soldiers, Gentlemen Pensioners, Band of Gentlemen, Band of Knights, Band of Barons, Trumpeters and Heralds. The QUEEN, accompanied by ladies, closed up with Guards.—The LORD MAYOR, &c., advance and kneel to the QUEEN.

Mayor. May't please your majesty, with duteous knees,—
That for our loving and right loyal hearts
Most truly vouch, as would our tongues for both—
Our happy privileges, of the which
Your gracious sceptre the high guardian is,
Thus lowly at your highness' feet we lay;
And with fair greeting, pray to welcome you
To your good city, here, of London.

Queen. Freely
Do we accept your greeting, citizens
Of London; of our loyal cities, chief;
The princess fair of commerce, that defies
The world to show her peer; whose merchantmen
Throng the broad seas with gallant fleets, the which
To float, the treasuries of kings might brag!
The privileges, which at our feet you lay,
We pray you to resume; and truly guard
For her behoof, who, in her subjects' weal,
Is proud to boast she still locks up her own.

Mayor. Our duties ever on your highness wait!

Queen. Proceed.

Albert [without]. The queen!—The queen!—Where!—
Where's the queen?

Officer. Stand back!

Queen. Make way!—Who calls upon the queen?

Officer. So please your majesty, a beggar-man!
Stand back!

Albert. The queen!—The queen!

Officer. Stand back, I say!

Queen. Hold, sirrah! Dare not stop my subjects' way
That come in suffering to me! Did I—when
My birth-right crown'd me, and I pass'd along,
My way beset with subjects, that more thick
Begirt me with their blessings, than their eyes—
My chariot frequent stay, that I might take
Their gifts of nosegays from poor women's hands,

And shall I now pass on, nor stop to hear
A poor man's prayer! Approach, whate'er thou art!

[*The Officer makes way for ALBERT, who enters.*
Albert. [*Presenting a scroll.*] Lead—Lead me to her high-
ness' feet! [*Kneels.*]

Justice, great queen!—Justice and mercy!

Queen. How!

Mercy appeals against justice; justice stops
The mouth of mercy!—Ask'st thou, then,
For both?

Albert. For mercy I'd implore, great queen, for one,
Whose high offence hath long contrition half
Atoned for,—half, the loss of sight—his just
And heavy penalty for swerving duty!
Justice I'd ask on one, whose daring wrong,
In open day, has robb'd me of my child—
A virgin, gracious queen, of beauty rare,
Although her father's eyes ne'er vouch'd for it!

Queen. But went she of her will?

Albert. No!—No!—by force
Just now!—i' th' public street!—in open day!
Torn from her parents, whither know they not—
A mother that in him, who should protect
Her child and her, finds but a heavy charge!
A father, with the limbs, and heart of one,
Still without eyes, is lopp'd of heart and limbs—
Unfit to succour those that cleave to him!
O royal maiden, take a maiden's part,
And, for her wrong, o'erlook the wrong, might stand
Betwixt thy justice and her injury!

Queen. Thy tears, old man, serve more than flashing eyes
To kindle up our wrath! Know'st thou the name
Of the offender?

Albert. No.

Queen. Nor rank?

Albert. Nor rank—

Unless a ring—which, in a scuffle, that
Befel with one, who tried to take her part,
Came from the finger of the ravisher—
Serve as a clue to find him.

Queen. Show it us!

This ring is not a stranger to us! Ha!
Waits in our train Lord Thomas Willoughby?

Wood. No, gracious mistress.

Queen. Read this document; [*Gives ALBERT's scroll.*]
Advise him straight of its contents; and add
Our will, that on receipt, with prompt despatch,
He lead the beggar's daughter to our feet—
His wedded bride! What to thyself relates,
We'll read at leisure; what to thy child, at once
We'll give our care to. Instruct us by what name
Thou, now, art known, or title?

Albert. The Blind Beggar
Of Bethnal Green.

Queen. Thy daughter's name?

Albert. 'Tis Bess.

Queen. Our own!—Of beauty rare, thou say'st?

Albert. Most rare!

Queen. And good?

Albert. Most good!

Queen. [*To Attendant.*] Look to this sightless man!
Our pleasure 'tis he waits upon us. On!
The glory it shall be of Bess's reign,
Her lowest subject, if his cause is right,
Hath, 'gainst her highest, odds; for beggar e'en,
He, still, shall have his queen to side with him! [*They go out.*]

Enter YOUNG SMALL and PETER newly attired.

Young S. There!—Said I not we should be late and lose
The setting out, wherein we might have mix'd
Unnoticed with the royal cavalcade;
And all through fault of thee, that took'st such time
To apparel thee—no doubt with wonderment
At such surpassing gear!—Let's breathe awhile.—
Peter, you'll ruin me! Is that a way
A serving-man should bear himself?—Consider—
Thy master, Peter, is a gentleman.

Peter. To keep in mind on't strive I all I can!

Young S. I say thou dost not, else would it appear.

Peter. It shall appear.

Young S. See that it do so, then—
Especially when thou walk'st out with me.
Then carry thus thy head, stand with an air!
Walk with a gait, as thou wast somebody;
And when thou speak'st, thou must speak up, like one
That values not who hears;—but not to me!
To me, good Peter, do thou none of these!
Speak small to me; wear thus thy head to me;
Stand thou not with an air when I am by;
Nor, when my eye's upon thee, move with gait
Of somebody! Thou'rt ever nobody
In presence of thy master!—minding still
To bear thee like a gentle serving-man.

Peter. I'll mind.

Young S. And do so!—And remember too
When I am seated, and thou wait'st on me,
Thou layest not thy hand upon my chair.
But stand at distance from't—nor yet in line,
But good a foot behind the rearmost leg;
Not in advance of that a barley-corn!
And balance not thy body on one leg,
With knee of t'other negligently bent,
As if it said "I care not!" 'Tis not meet.
But stand on both, as every joint of thee

Acknowledged me thy master—not astride,
 But heel to heel!—And keep thy finger from
 Thy button-hole!—but not to cram it in
 Thy poke! Nor yet on hip to rest it!—'Twere
 As thou wouldst say, "I think myself a lord!"
 Thou wouldst not fold thine arms! Field-marshal, Peter,
 Could do no more—do nothing with thine arms,
 But let them hang! There! Seem'st thou now indeed
 A serving-man.

Peter. Will that content you?

Young S. Yes.

But mark! Thou hast play'd with me at quoits and loggats,
 No more of that!

Peter. I'll mind.

Young S. And when I have order'd me a tankard out,
 And given it thee to hold, thou more than once
 Hast quaff'd it off to my good luck.—Be sure
 No more of that!

Peter. I'll try and mind. But, sir—
 Since so I must accost thee—what avail
 The gait and air of gentle serving-man,
 Without the pocket, should belong to one?
 Look there!

Young S. What's that?

Peter. A melancholy rap!
 A black-faced copper sixpence! Add to which
 A button without shank, and you sum up
 The pocket of your gentle serving-man!
 I ne'er can do without allowances!

Young S. Allowances!—What wages got you from
 My father, Peter?

Peter. 'Twere a cunning clerk
 Could count them,—Purse was never made, would wear
 With hoarding them. To coin them took it not
 Gold, silver, no nor copper! I served him for
 My bed and board, that board and bed were none,
 But shifts for them; a jerkin in the year
 And doublet—old apparel new made up;
 Hose, when the feet had walk'd away from them;
 Shoes, whose last mending had the cobbler brought
 To his last wits; and hat that gaped to see
 Its crown was gone; with what good luck besides
 Might send me.

Young S. And thou want'st allowances!
 Do I not promise thee a pound a year?
 Jerkin and doublet, to provide thee with,
 The thirtieth penny on the counter rang
 The knell of half a crown! Hose got I thee,
 With feet unto them, newly vamp'd and darn'd!
 And from the cordiner, himself, direct,
 Wast thou not shod? Nor was thy head forgot.
 With thy well-furnish'd trunk to make it match,

Did I not treat it to a crown-whole hat,
 Nor yet at outlay stopp'd, so ruinous,
 But in the hat a comely feather stuck,
 At charge of twice a groat? No more of this!
 Believe when thou'rt well off.—There's twopence for thee,
 To show thee that thou serv'st a gentleman!
 Dream'st thou sometimes?

Peter. I do.

Young S. What's the best dream
 A man can dream?

Peter. They say 'tis hanging.

Young S. So!
 Didst thou not dream of hanging yesternight?

Peter. I did.

Young S. Thy dream's come out! Thy fortune's made,
 But knew'st thou it—Come on! Content thee, and
 Thou shalt have pence! Mind how thou bear'st thyself!
 Well done! But keep to that! So.—Follow me. [*They go out.*]

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Room in an Inn at Romford.*

Enter Hostess and RALPH.

Hostess. Now have I told thee all—how she came here
 On Tuesday night, sore faint and travel-worn,
 When thou at Epping wast upon the roam;
 How from her home, by bold and lawless men,
 She had been forced; how she escaped their hands;
 How, when she reach'd her parents' roof again,
 Deserted 'twas,—its tenants doubtless gone
 In quest of her; how, knowing not what way
 To go, she put her trust in Heaven to guide her,
 Which brought her to our door!

Ralph. Inform'd she thee
 Who were her parents?

Hostess. No. I ask'd, but saw
 The question troubled her, so ask'd no more.
 I see thou think'st her fair. Now, mark me, Ralph.
 Thou'rt less sedate, I know, than thou art wild,—
 And, still, I think there's in thy heart a check
 Of ruth and honesty, that draws thee back
 When passion 'cross their bounds would have thee wing.
 Beware then, Ralph, her beauty tempt thee not
 To do her wrong! She's poor! She has not friend,

Of right, she here can call so—has not home,
 Save what a stranger's roof supplies her with;
 The labour of her hands is all her means;
 Her virtue is their strength; who'd rob them on't,
 Were he my son, he were not villain only,
 But coward mean to boot!

Ralph. Nay, mother, nay,
 I'm not that lackgrace yet! Give thou consent,
 I'm wived to-morrow, for sweet Bessy's sake.

Hostess. I'll think on't, Ralph. Meantime bestir thee, son;
 Look to the gentleman, since Wednesday last
 Took up his quarters here.

Ralph. The gentleman?
 My shoe's a gentleman!

Hostess. How, sirrah! this
 Thy manners?

Ralph. Mother, I overheard—
Hostess. Didst what?

I'll have no list'ners in my house,
 No eaves-droppers! no ears that wait on keyholes!
 Who take their quarters up at the Queen's Arms,
 Shall have their secrets, as their luggage, safe!
 Fie on thee, Ralph! No more on't! Mind thyself!
 Thy mother's hard-earn'd gains not more were won
 By thrift than honesty; whom they enrich
 Must honest be as thrifty. So be thou!
 My son is he, not of my blood that's drop,
 But portion of my heart.—Not so—I'd take
 A hind that is, to be thy mother's heir. [RALPH goes out.
 All's right and tidy,—each thing in its place,
 And cleverly put out of hand. No cup,
 Tankard, or flagon, but its face might show
 To polish'd silver, rich and bright as 'tis.
 There's sure a virtue in her touch, that leaves
 All things it meets as ne'er they look'd before!
 Luck hath she brought with her. Since here she came,
 No house in Romford holds its head so high
 As the Queen's Arms, for balm of sparkling ale,
 Cordial of sack, and nectar of bright wine!
 Would she were wife to Ralph! We cannot hope
 To keep the treasure, long, that's coveted
 By all who see it, and by right's not ours.
 But, yet, who is she?—Ralph's my son; and heir
 To good a hundred pounds a year, besides
 His father's house and land. Her courtesy might
 An heiress' self vouchsafe to make to Ralph;
 When he should wed, I ever look'd, at least,
 To give my blessing to some doctor's, squire's,
 Or curate's daughter. Wed him shall I to
 One knows not whom?—I'll question her more closely.
 His father, when he wived, took home his match,
 And so must he! She comes. [BESS sings without.

No need to keep
 Blackbird or thrush, while she is in the house ;
 So sweet and active is her pretty throat.
 What's that she looks thus constant at, whene'er
 She thinks herself alone ! but when observed,
 Confused and startled, nestles in her breast ?

*Enter BESS with her father's picture, which she frequently
 examines while she sings.*

The blind man's at the door,
 And won't you let him in ?
 He plays the harp, he'll spare no pains,
 Your favour for to win.
 He'll sing you fits, one, two, or three,
 And he'll ask you a groat—no more ;
 And, grudge you the groat, he'll be thankful for less—
 The blind man's at the door !

He'll sing you stories, sad,
 He'll sing you stories, gay ;
 And call as often as you please,
 He will not say you nay.
 If you fill him a cup, he's a happy blind man,
 As oft he has been before ;
 But, grudge you the cup, he's contented with none—
 The blind man's at the door !

The blind man's at the door,
 And shelter none has he ;
 The sky doth smile, or it doth frown,
 But which he cannot see !
 If you welcome him in, what cares he for the sky ?
 It may shine, or it may pour !
 But, grudge you that grace, wet or dry he must on !—
 The blind man's at the door !

*[At the conclusion of the song, the Hostess approaches
 and steals a look at the picture.]*

Hostess. Whose picture is that, my Bess ?

Bess. My father's.

Hostess. Then

Was never father better loved than thine !
 Nay, blush not, that thou lovest thy father well !
 Show't me. He is a father to be loved !
 No wonder thou shouldst keep it next thy heart ;
 I well could take't to mine ! Thou blushest more
 And more. Thou silly wench ! There, put it up.
 I like to hear thee sing, my pretty Bess ;
 'Tis gladness to my heart ! Art happy, Bess,
 To live with me ?

Bess. As far as happiness

Can live with Bess,—her parents lost—herself
 Unable to provide her home or friend !

Hostess. Not so, my pretty Bess ! Herself can best

Provide her these. No customer that comes
To the Queen's Arms, and hath unmistress'd house,
But would be glad if Bess its mistress were—
Knew he her history.

Bess. [Aside.] Her history?

Hostess. One likes to know

Whence people come—who people are—their birth
And parentage. Wast thou a lady born,
I could not love thee better than I do;
But loving thee so well, I'd know who 'tis,
So well I love. Who art thou, pretty Bess?

*Bess. [Aside.] If I should say I am a beggar's child,
The door, that took me in, may thrust me out!
If aught beside, I speak what is not truth,
And that I'll never speak!—You think me good:
You find me willing—useful in the house—
Not knowing who I am. To teach you that,
More good, more willing, useful, makes me not;
Then do not seek to know't! I dare be bound,
If cause I give you not for more content,
I'll give you none for less!*

*Hostess. Where mystery is,
Doubt is. We hide what we're afraid to show.
If I be come of honest kind, care I
Who knows my father's name? I'd cry it from
The steeple-top! To be a friend, we needs
Must find a friend. My friend is she, alone,
That trusts me. If my love's not worth as much,
Better I keep it to myself! Fair brow
Thou hast, and open too! I ween thy heart's
As fair—but why is't not as open, Bess?—
Why, whither goest thou?*

*Bess. [Who while the Hostess has been speaking, has put on
her cloak and bonnet.] I know not—but
I know I must go hence! You're right!—'Tis fit
One know who 'tis they lodge—who 'tis they love.
'Tis little to ask that! Alas for them
That are not masters of so small a boon!
They may be question'd—wonder were they not!
They may be doubted—they cannot complain!
They may lack friend—they've but themselves to blame!
Farewell—Thanks!—Thanks! all thanks!—'Twas all a gift!
The wind and rain, on which you shut the door
That let me in, had just as much a right
To enter it as I. I'm rested now,
Refresh'd and strengthen'd—Every foot I go
I'll bless you that I am so!*

*Hostess. Leave me, Bess!
That shalt thou never! Give me off thy cloak!
Prevent me not!—thy bonnet I'll untie,
Or never more may I tie on my own!
Ah! Bess, dost mind me? Care I who thou art?
Or doubt I thee? or am I not thy friend?*

Nay, if thou leav'st the house, I leave it too!
 I'll have no house that does not roof thy head!
 For ever live with me! [*Embraces her.*] Want'st thou a right?
 A right thou soon shalt have. Ralph loves thee, Bess,—
 Whoe'er thou art, thou shalt be wife to Ralph!
 Nay, answer not! I say I'll have it so!
 See if I love thee now! Here's company—
 I'll look to them. Go dry thine eyes, sweet Bess!
 Thou shalt be daughter, wife, and all, my Bess!
 [*They go out severally.*]

SCENE II.—*A Private Room in the Queen's Arms.**Enter RALPH.*

Ralph. Look to thy birthright, Ralph!—Avails it not
 To be thy mother's son that nature made,
 Thou must be offspring of her humour too!
 Is't fault of thine that thou art not a wall?
 But listenest, when men, in earshot, tell
 Their loose-kept secrets! Gentleman, forsooth!
 My gentleman's gentleman!—the scrub of him!
 The helper o' the scrub—a counterfeit,
 Not worth the brad should nail it to the counter,—
 To some vile counter,—has been taken thence;
 And the base metal coin'd anew, to pass,
 To pass for honest coin! 'Twon't pass with me!
 He trusts to make his fortune by the priest—
 Of some rich dame the favour sweet to win—
 And thereunto he follows the queen's court;
 But stopping, on his way, at Romford, here
 Sets eye upon the linnet I would lime,
 And tarries at our house. But, lest he spoil
 My sport, I've pointed out the bush to him
 Where sits a goldfinch—but a painted one—
 Our Kate, that vows to wed a gentleman!—
 Our chambermaid! to seek her fortune, come
 Like him to Romford, and alighted here.
 He takes her for a maid of noble stock;
 In her own right, a costly heiress, flying
 Compell'd espousals, and, in the disguise
 Of lowly chambermaid, close crouching, here
 To shun pursuit.—Ha! Here she comes!—Good day.

Enter KATE.

Sweet Kate.

Kate. Hold off! I'm Kate too sweet for thee!*Ralph.* Indeed! When shall we call thee wife, sweet Kate?*Kate.* When thou hold'st stirrup to my husband!*Ralph.* How!Will nothing less content thee? Marry, Kate,
 Marry thy match, or count to die a maid!*Kate.* My match is he that fits *my* thought, not thine.*Ralph.* Thy match is he that fits thy fortune, Kate.

Kate. Not so, when I my fortune am above.

Ralph. Their fortune, who're above, oft fall below.

Kate. Leave me to look to that.

Ralph. Look to it, then,

Thy new year's gift I'll double for thee, Kate,

If, ere the year comes round, thou curtsey not

The wife of honest hind!

Kate. The hind I'll wed

Thou'lt touch thy bonnet to!

Ralph. Ay, shall I, Kate,

When he to me doffs his.

Kate. Doffs his to thee?

He first shall doff his head!

Ralph. Nay, Kate, be friends!

Not only do I wish thee well to wed,

But, if I could, would help thee, pretty Kate;

And I *can* help thee, if thou'rt in the mood.

Kate. What! in the mood to help thee to a jest?

Ralph. Thyself be judge! The gentleman that came

On Wednesday, throws soft glances at thee, Kate—

Is that a jest? I've heard, thy cousin, Kate,

Was cousin's cousin to the cousin of

An earl, sweet Kate—I've told him so! Is that

A jest? Thou know'st how windfalls come—How men

To-day but ragged knaves, next day are seen

To strut as robéd lords—how oft the tree

Of noble family has wither'd, branch

By branch, till none to bear its honours left,

They're gone to cover some poor distant graft,

The parent stock ne'er threw its shadow on!

Why may't not hap to thee?—I think it may—

I *wish* it may—and, as 'tis easy, Kate,

To fancy what we wish, I've told him, thou

An heiress art, and hast a title, too!

Is that a jest? Let but thy bearing back

My giving out, I'd marvel not if ere

A quarter of a year—a month—a week,

I doff my bonnet to thy spouse, indeed!

Is that a jest?

Kate. Ralph, thou'rt an honest lad!

Ralph. When thou repair'st to church, may I, sweet Kate,

Make bold to kiss thee when the knotting's done?

Kate. I shall not mind, for old acquaintance, Ralph.

Ralph. And when thou'rt married, may I sometimes call?

Kate. Ay, mayst thou, Ralph.

Ralph. How often?—Once a year?

Kate. I'll not be angry, Ralph, though it be twice.

Ralph. How kind thou art!—and when I call, sweet Kate,

Wilt bid the lackey ask me in?

Kate. I will.

Ralph. And order Master Ralph a cup of sack,
To drink thy health, while in the hall he stands?

Kate. As sure as I shall be a lady, Ralph.

Ralph. Thou shalt be married to a gentleman !
And here he comes—Observe him, bonny Kate,
The visage, figure, habit, air, and walk
Of gentleman ! To note his only gait,
A man would say, or he lack'd brains, there goes
At least a handsome thousand pounds a year !
When thou shalt call him spouse ! Away, my Kate.
Don thou a whiter 'kerchief—change this cap
For thy Sunday one, with bows as broad and red
As full-blown peonies ! and, soon as done,
Come back again, when thou shalt find him here—
And troll that pretty song you sang to us
On Tuesday night—as though you mark'd him not.
Love in his heart be sure hath taken root—
See how 'twill grow apace and come to fruit !
Bear thee as lofty gentlewoman, Kate ;
Go proudly, Kate, and not as chambermaid !
Of maids thou shalt be mistress !—Well done, Kate !

[*KATE goes out.*]

Here comes, indeed, my gentleman, from top
To toe new-furnish'd, as on conquest bent. [*Retires up stage.*]

Enter YOUNG SMALL.

Young S. Debate it thus. What's love ? It is not land
Or gold. 'Tis not attire or tenement ;
Or meat or drink ! What is the worth on't then ?
Nothing ! It makes not wise—for these are things
That wise men covet, and 'twould counsel me
To part with them. It makes not great—great men
Hath love undone. 'Tis not content—I ne'er
Saw lover yet but he was woe-begone !
Its signs are willows, darts, and bleeding hearts !
I'll none on't, I'm resolved ! Sweet mistress Bess !

Ralph. Sweet mistress Kate thou mean'st.

Young S. Right, Master Ralph.
Yet mistress Bess is sweet ! But what of that ?
'Tis fit a gentleman a lady wed—
So Kate's the maid for me ! I'll conquer love !
Love's no small thing to conquer. Men fall sick
For love—go mad for love !—hang, drown themselves !—
But love has met its match when it meets me !
You see I'm ready, Ralph.

Ralph. I see you are.
Ay, that's the way to go a-wooing !

Young S. What,
It strikes you ?

Ralph. Yes !

Young S. The jerkin's a new cut,
Or else the tailor's perjured—Oath he took
It should be made as never jerkin was !

Ralph. His oath he has kept!

Young S. You mark my doublet too?

Ralph. Else lack'd I eyes.

Young S. And how the sleeves are slash'd?

Ralph. 'Tis slashing work indeed! She must have heart.
Of stone, gives she not in.

Young S. A fine effect!

And then my hat!—What think you of the set?

Ralph. A gallant set—a very gallant set,
Most valiantly turn'd up!

Young S. The feather red!

Blood-red! and nearly of a rapier's length!

The loop of warlike steel! So, what with loop,

Feather, and set, methinks it is a hat

Cries—"Touch me not."

Ralph. Methinks it is.

Young S. 'Twas made
To special order!

Ralph. So 'twould seem.

Young S. You know
They like a gallant bearing. I would look
A very Hector, when I go to woo!

Ralph. And thou hast hit it.

Young S. On your honour, now?

Ralph. Else never man hit anything.

Young S. Indeed!

I thank you, master Ralph. I'm glad you're pleased.

You have a taste! Beshrew me but you have!

How would you have me wear my rapier? So?

Or so?

Ralph. Why, so—It better shows the hilt.

Young S. A pretty hilt? I bought it for the hilt.
The cutler would have palm'd upon me one

Of better blade! He thought he had a fool

To deal with! Buy a rapier for the blade!

Who shows the blade?

Ralph. Most true.

Young S. I think I'll do.

Ralph. No doubt on't—Here she comes, sir.—That's her
voice.

Didst ever hear her sing, sir?

[*KATE sings without.*

Young S. Never.

Ralph. No!

Then never did you hear a nightingale.

Apart till awhile, sir, you'll hear her voice.

Enter KATE, and sings.

What shall I give to win your heart,

My pretty chambermaid?

What shall I give to win your heart?

I've land! I've gold! With aught I'll part

To make you mine, he said.

The maid, kind sir, whose heart is sold,
 A well-a-day may sing!
 The maid, kind sir, whose heart is sold,
 Gives more than worth of land or gold—
 Unless a golden ring!

Say aught but that, my bonny queen,
 And thou'rt my own, he said.
 Say aught but that, my bonny queen—
 Who gives not that, she said, is e'en
 Beneath a chambermaid!

Take that, take that, and all beside,
 Be mine, be mine, he said!
 Take that, take that, and all beside;
 She's worth me, that must be my bride,
 Though but a chambermaid!

Ralph. Up to her, sir—yet hold! I'll whisper her
 A word, commending thee. Your gentle blood
 Is skittish, sir, and mettlesome—Behoves
 You tenderly approach, yet watchfully;
 'Tis quick of instinct too, to know its kind.
 Was ever balance poised by thee or thine,
 Yard flourish'd, counter brush'd, or ledger scrawl'd,
 'Tis odds she'll apprehend it in a trice.
 Thank fate, thou art indeed a gentleman!

Young S. [Aside.] I'd thank it, never had I pass'd for one.
 A score of crowns for my own clothes again!
 What if she find, despite the tailor's craft,
 The hatter's, jeweller's, and milliner's,
 My suit is not a fit!—undress me!—bid me
 Put on the counter clothes again, and wait
 Upon my father's customers! The thought
 Has set my heart a-thumping! Thomas Small!
 Better thou hadst remain'd thy father's dog,
 Than ta'en a roam to Romford.

Ralph. Kate, behoves
 Thou bear thyself as lofty gentlewoman.
 If he looks ten feet high, do thou look twenty;
 When he accosts thee, eye him up and down,
 And down and up again from head to foot;
 He verily believes thou art a lady,
 Keep him to that—Thy arms a-kimbo put—
 Walk to and fro, and toss thy pretty head!
 Behoves fine ladies give themselves fine airs,
 Or who would know them fine—

Up to her now. [To YOUNG SMALL.]

Young S. Fair Kate, a word I fain would speak to thee.

Kate. [Following RALPH'S direction.] Sir! [YOUNG SMALL
starts back, KATE walks about as instructed.]

Ralph. Now, stick up to her, or, as I live,
 You'll lose her, sir. Set thou to work as well,
 Pace to and fro, a yard at every step—

Great men, I have remark'd, take mighty strides—
That's right!—She stops—Now to the charge again!
Tell her thou hast a guess of her estate;
'Twill soften her—but mind thou nothing bate
The feeling of thine own, as right thou shouldst not!
Thou art, from top to toe, a gentleman!

Young S. A cunning man who feels himself to be
The man he knows he is not! I perceive
'Tis not the clothes that make the gentleman.
Odzooks! she traversed me from top to toe,
As she would lay me open with her eye.
I vow I feel as I were like to swoon—
O Little Cheap!—Snug Little Cheap! As much
As once I wish'd me out of thee, I now
Wish I were back again!

Ralph. Now, pretty Kate,
Let's calm a little—thou hast quite convinced him.
Thou art, indeed, a gentlewoman born;
Put off a cloud or two, and now and then,
When next he speaks, give out a blink of sun,
But not that he forget 'twas tempest, Kate.
Take out thy 'kerchief—hast thou one. Now draw it
From corner unto corner—be it clean.
Now pass it 'cross thy face, and back again;
Now use it so, as ladies do a fan;
Betray a little agitation, Kate;
Swing on one foot thy body to and fro,
And with thy other beat upon the ground.
Now, sir, at once propose for her—speak up!
Have not a faint heart!

Young S. No!

Ralph. Remember you're
A gentleman.

Young S. I do!

Ralph. And so you are
From top to toe!

Young S. I thank you, Ralph—You're good.

Ralph. And so your father was before you, sir,
And quite as much his father before him;
Was he not, sir?

Young S. Ay, quite as much, good Ralph,
Or, if he was not, I'm no gentleman.

Ralph. Then, now at once propose for her. Hem! twice
Or thrice before you speak, and broadly hint
At her gentility.

Young S. Engaging Kate—
As gentleman should gentlewoman wed,
So fain would I to wife take thee, sweet Kate!

[Turns to RALPH.
And now I must take breath! I tell thee, Ralph,
To woo a lady is no easy thing. [Retires.

Ralph. Kate, canst thou blush? If not, why hang thy head,

And look as though thou knew'st not where to look,
 And clasp thy hands and twirl thy thumbs about,
 And make a shift to squeeze out half a sigh,
 But loud enough to hear. Well done! well done!
 Bespeaks her every way a gentlewoman—
 Does she not, sir?

[To YOUNG SMALL.

Young S. Upon my life it does.

Ralph. Now bring her to the point of yes or no.

Young S. Of yes or no?

Ralph. Yes!

Young S. Yes or no! I vow

I tremble at the thought on't—Just I feel
 As though I play'd at loggats, and a pound
 Were laid upon the game, and mine the throw.

Ralph. Well, sir?

Young S. Good Ralph—I'll take a little time.

Ralph. So do. He comes to pop the question, Kate.
 When first he speaks, no answer render him:
 Nor yet the second time—nor yet the third.

Kate. No, Ralph?

Ralph. Be patient, Kate! It were not meet,
 In such a strait, a lady speak at once!
 The thought should seem to take away thy breath;
 Thou shouldst appear as thou wast like to faint,
 And do, sweet Kate!—I'll be beside thee—Fall
 Upon my shoulder—and when I say “now,”
 Come to thyself—but mind, not all at once,
 But bit by bit—I'll have him at thy feet.
 Look at him once, and turn away again—
 Another time—and try to turn away,
 But, finding that thou canst not do't, cry “yes!”
 And, quite o'ercome, fall plump into his arms!
 You'll mind?

Kate. Be sure of me.

Ralph. Make sure of him!

Up to her now, sir!—Now or never, sir!

Young S. Dear Kate! wilt be my bride?

Ralph. Again, sweet sir!

Young S. Dear Kate! wilt be my bride, a second time?
 Sweet Kate, the third time. Wilt thou be my bride?

[KATE falls on RALPH's shoulder.

Ralph. I do believe she faints.

Young S. She does indeed!

She's a true lady—On my life she is.

Ralph. Down on your knees, sir—both your knees—and chafe
 Her hands with yours—kissing them now and then—
 And 'gainst she comes unto herself, 'twere well
 If you could squeeze a tear into your eye:—
 Fair Kate, awake! Your lover's at your feet,
 Kneeling as well behoves a gentleman—Now—

Kate. [Recovers—follows RALPH's directions.] Yes! [Throw-
 ing herself into SMALL's arms, nearly oversetting him.

Ralph. Hold up, sweet sir, and try to bear
 This overpowering happiness!—To both
 I wish a world of joy.—Take her apart [To *SMALL*.
 Into the garden. Never drop thy suit
 Until she name the day, and be't to-morrow.
 "The cup, sir, and the lip!" But, gentle Kate, [To *KATE*.
 'Tis not enough the bird is limed, behoves
 You have him in your hand—Good sir!—fair lady!
 I give you joy, and wish you a good day! [Goes out.
Young S. Come, gentle Kate, that is to be my bride.
Kate. O, la, sir!
Young S. Sir! call me thy Thomas, Kate.
 My name is Thomas—master Thomas.
Kate. La!
 I ne'er can call thee Thomas.
Young S. Yes, thou canst,
 And wilt!—dear Thomas!—thy own Thomas!
Kate. La!
Young S. As I will call thee my own Kate, be sure,
 As soon as we are man and wife.
Kate. O, la!
 Don't talk of it.
Young S. Of what else should I talk?
 Come Kate—my wife!—my lady Kate!
Kate. O, la! [They go out.

SCENE III.—The Bar and Parlour.

Enter the Hostess, conducting LAST, MORTICE, and MALLET.

Hostess. Walk in, good master Mallet. Gentlemen,
 Walk in, you're welcome. What will't please you have?
 We've choice for all, and nought but's of the best.

Mallet. We'll taste your ale, good mistress Trusty. Hark!
 How does your pretty barmaid? Did you speak,
 As late you promised, a good word for me?

Hostess. I did.

Mallet. And was she pleased?

Hostess. 'Tis hard to say
 When maids are pleased. When I myself was one,
 What most I seem'd was, oft, what least I felt.

Mortice. Your ear, kind hostess.—Gave you mistress Bess
 The message that I sent her?

Hostess. Word for word.

Mortice. What word did she return me?

Hostess. Marry, none!

Bess is a prudent wench. Maids' thoughts go cheap
 That can be had for asking! Little worth,
 Yet hoarded charily, great price they bring.
 I found it so myself when I was young.

Last. A word, good mistress Trusty, when you're done.

Hostess. I'm at your service, now, sir.

Last. Handed you
My gift to Bess?

Hostess. I did.

Last. And took she it?

Hostess. She took it not.—'Tis here for you again.
Presents to maids are earnest. Take they them,
They next should take the donors. Had not I
Thought so in my free days, I should have won
A dower in gifts! You shall be served anon.

Mortice. I guess you've come bad speed.

Last. Hast thou come better?

Mallet. The fault's our own. Love's not a game at law,
Wherein the player is not he that stakes.
I'll play my game myself, and ask sweet Bess
To church to-morrow!

Last. So will I.

Mortice. And I.

[*They go out.*]

[*Bess crosses the stage after them with a tankard.*]

Enter Hostess conducting BELMONT and WILFORD.

Hostess. Walk in, walk in—I'll show you to a room.

Wilf. And please you get my chamber ready straight;
I will, at once, to bed.

Hostess. I'll see to't, sir:

He early goes to rest—He must be ill?
Love-sick perhaps? There's comfort for him then,
Like all his sex he'll soon get over that!

Bel. Hostess!

Hostess. Your will?

Bel. I'd try your wine—Is't good?

Hostess. The very best! Please you sit down, good sirs.

[*Places chairs and goes out.*]

Bel. Still rapt as ever! Rouse thee, Wilford, rouse thee!
Shake off this lethargy, and be a man!

Take faster hold of hope! We'll find her yet.
But should we fail, what then? Art thou to pine
To death? This malady is of the head
More than the heart. Believe it can be cured,
Thou'lt find 'twill be so. Be thyself again!
Be free! But once beheld may be forgot.

Wilf. Yes, if a thing that any fellow hath!

I may forget a diamond, can I find
Another one as rich; but show me one
That is the paragon of all the mine,
And try if that's forgot, though seen but once!
Say that but once I see a beauteous star,
I may forget it for another star;
But say but once I gaze upon the sun,
And name the orb will blot its image out!

Bel. But of a single draught of love to die!

Wilf. Why not? There is your poison, strong and weak;

One kind admits of antidote—one not.
 One by the drachm, one by the scruple, kills :
 Another by the grain—for not in bulk,
 But subtleness, the lethal virtue lies.
 So are there kinds in love ! A dozen shafts
 May gall him, and the bounding deer run on,—
 But one shot home, behold he's down at once !

BESS enters with wine, which she places on a table, at some distance from BELMONT and WILFORD ; the former sees her at once, and regards her with an expression of fixed admiration—the latter remaining in a state of perfect abstraction.

Bel. E'er saw'st thou thing so fair ?

Wilf. What speak'st thou of ?

Bel. Yon maid that waits on us.

Wilf. I've seen ! I've seen !

Bel. This is to dream !

He sleeps—I'll wake him then. My pretty maid,
 Hand thou the cup to yonder gentleman.

[BESS, whose eyes have just fallen on WILFORD, stands gazing upon him, apparently insensible to everything else.

What ails the girl ? Does she not hear ? She's fix'd
 As statue to the pedestal—what is't
 She gazes at ? As I'm alive, 'tis he !
 Commend me to a sallow cheek ! She's smit,
 If Cupid is a marksman ! Maids, I've heard,
 Like books they weep over, the which, the more
 They're made to melt, the greedier they devour !
 See how she reads him ! Marry, she will get
 The book by heart !

Bess. 'Tis he ! 'tis he ! How's this ?
 I feel at home the while I look on him !
 Seem near me hearts I know ! I could believe
 The roof our own ! I scarce would start, were now
 The door to ope, to see my father's face !
 Yet what is he to me ? Acquaintance of
 My eyes, whom ne'er they met but once before !

Bel. A shot ! a shot ! Cupid is in the vein !

Bess. *[Drawing her father's picture from her bosom.]*
 How like ! how like ! how very—very like !
 There only wants a smile upon the lip—
 I think the lip more sweet the smile away—
 Fie ! 'tis my father's lip ! My father, then,
 As often I have heard my mother say,
 Had newly won my mother's love—I ween
 My mother then smiled too ! Who ought to smile,
 If not the maid that's woo'd by him she'd wed ?
 Her Bess will never wed !

Bel. A sigh ! Be sure
 The arrow's home !

Bess. Just now I felt at home,

And now I feel a thousand miles from home!
 Things, strange before, are now still stranger grown,
 And he most strange of all—the farthest off,
 The least expected ever to be near—
 The sight of whom brought home so near to Bess!
 What's Bess's home to him? He'd pass the door,
 And would not know she dwelt there! If he did,
 Would never thank the latch to let him in!
 He has a home, and friends that love him there—
 Friends that he loves. Poor Bess is far from home,
 Was never farther—never half so far!

Hostess [without]. Why, Bess! what, Bess!

Bel. How deep the maiden's trance.

Hostess enters, and goes to her.

Hostess. Why Bess, what ails thee, child?

Bess. [Abstractedly.] Anon! anon!

I'll do it this moment.

Hostess. Do it! what wilt do?

Bess. [Confused and hurriedly.] Whate'er you bid.

Hostess. Why, what has happen'd to her!

Look to the bar till I come back again.

Why Bess, dost hear me, that thou dost not move?

Bess. [Confused.] I'll go this moment—Where am I to go?

Hostess. The girl's bewilder'd! "Where am I to go!"
 Canst tell me what I said to thee just now?

Bess. Thou saidst, I think—or I mistake—thou saidst—

Thou saidst—perhaps I did not rightly hear;

Thinking of one thing, one forgets at times

Another thing—Thou saidst—It was not that—

Nor that—In sooth, I know not what thou saidst—

Hostess. I knew't. I bade thee go and mind the bar.

Bess. I'll do't. [*Still looking in the direction of WILFORD.*]

Hostess. Thou'lt do't! and go'st thou not to do it?

Yonder's the bar—Why, Bess, thou art asleep!

Thou dreamest! Rouse thee, Bess. Go, mind the bar.

The girl's not like herself!

[*Bess and Hostess go out severally.*]

Bel. A point-blank shot!

An entry this in Cupid's register!

Lord Wilford, was't not noon with you just now?

Wilf. Noon!

Bel. Felt you not the sun?

Wilf. The sun! what sun?

Bel. I' faith a glorious one, but not so kind
 As that which shines by day; for not a beam
 It threw on aught beside. You were its earth—
 The grateful earth unlike—the orb alone
 For which its light seem'd made; absorbing it,
 Without so much as e'en a smile, to show
 You knew't from very darkness!

Wilf. You are merry;

And I can only wonder that you are,—
 As sickness doth, that health can feed, while she
 Herself from rarest viands loathing turns!
 It is not fancy; or, if fancy 'tis,
 'Tis such as breeds reality—as, from
 Imagination only of disease
 Disease itself will grow. Do I but dream?
 Say that the anguish of a probéd wound
 Is but a dream!—Say he that writhes in fire
 Is fancy-haunted—just as much am I!
 See'st not my fever? Is't not in mine eye?
 My cheek? if not, my pulse will show it thee!
 For if its throb be not the counter one
 To that which haleness knows, 'tis anything;
 But index of my heart!

Hostess enters.

Hostess. Ho! Bess, I say!

Enter BESS, who is immediately perceived by WILFORD, and meeting his eye, stands as transfixed.

Why, Bess, how's this? Is't true thou wast o'erheard
 To one, to two, and three, to give consent,
 When ask'd to be a wife? Art thou not pledged
 To marry Ralph?

Wilf. Is she to be a bride?

Bel. Are you awake?

Wilf. I am! I am!—as one,
 That long at sea pines till he's sick, for land,
 And, ever dreaming on't, starts up at last,
 With the rebound which says his bark has struck,
 And drowns in sight and very reach of it!

Bel. Is that the maid?

Wilf. It is. Now wonder at me!
 Wouldst thou not ask, sprang ever that from earth?
 Look there, and think of an anatomy!
 Can lurk the canker death in such a cheek?
 Is not that flower imperishable, as
 It lodged the virtue of the feignéd one,
 Which never dies—in poet's song yclept
 The immortal amaranth! Is she to be
 A bride? I'll speak to her!

Bel. Thou'rt mad!

Wilf. And if I am,
 Then once at least is madness rational.
 Being what I am, not to be mad as I,
 Were to be kindred to the eloddish brute,
 That looks at her and knows not what it sees!—
 Prevent me not! Art pledged to any one?
 Art thou to be a bride? Say yes or no.

Hostess. Speak, Bess! Say yes! Thou know'st thou'rt
 pledged to Ralph!

Enter RALPH.

Maids, sir, you know, are coy—give me thy hand.
There—art thou now content?

[Places her hand in RALPH'S without her being conscious of it.]

Wilf. Content!—Enough!
O'ermeasure on't! I've done,—Yet would I touch
The precious thing, so much I've coveted,
Was ne'er till now in reach of—now, so near—
Find can ne'er be mine!—Whoe'er thou art,
Thou art acquaintance of my heart—as soon
As seen, beloved! I saw thee only once,
That once too oft!—For then I thought upon
My marriage-bell, and wish'd it might be thine,
But now, when thine they ring, they ring my knell!
'Tis not a crime to kiss thy hand, while yet
The banning of the priest forbids me not.
There! Let thy bridegroom at the altar set,
In presence of the watching cherubim,
A truer seal upon thy lip than that
I've fixed upon thy hand—though his shall last
Till doomsday! Take me hence! 'Tis hard to look
At what we wish were ours, and while we do't,
Persuade ourselves it cannot be.—Take me hence!
The only sight of her is hold too strong
For me to struggle 'gainst! It pulls me towards her!
I feel as though she'd suck my vision in!
My breath! my life!—I cannot quit her!

[Breaks from BELMONT and rushes towards her. RALPH interposes. WILFORD seems to have lost all power over himself. BELMONT approaches him to lead him out; but, when at the wing, he turns—gazes distractedly upon BESS.]

Lost!

[Rushes out, followed by BELMONT, and at the same moment BESS sinks senseless on the shoulder of RALPH.]

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The Front of the Queen's Arms.*

Enter PETER from the Inn, singing.

A white gown and girdle,
A knot of the same;
And come to our wedding,
Both damsel and dame!

Peter. A charming day! A most pleasant day! and pleasant and charming work too—work fit for such a day! Right excellent work! Wedding and feasting! The feasting for me; the wedding for them that like it. For mine own part, holding the sex to be a provocative to wrath, which is sin, I'd sooner hang than wed! But for the feasting—there I'm your man! Roast, boiled, or fried, was never the dish that couldn't warrant me the smoothest-temper'd fellow in Christendom—with the special provision that there was enough on't. I wouldn't say as much of a cup, for a cup is a thing that a man of very oil and sugar will sometimes quarrel over; but, from ale to sack, I defy any man living to say he ever saw me quarrel *with* my cup—barring the liquor was bad, or the cup empty. If I'm not the man for a feast, then never man sat down to one. I could feast it you seven days out of the week, and let him that can, do more. Nay, were there eight days in the week, and the week nothing the longer, I could feast it to the eighth day too. So the good cheer sha'n't lag for me. [Sings.

Your bran new jerkins, gallants don,
Or jerkins new, as you may;
But the gallant whose mood is not o' the best,
Were best to stay away.

I'll give them a song. Marry, that can I, when I am tuned to the pitch. I'm none of your sober singers—your trollers of long-winded ballads with a burden to them. I hate your burdens! To be outsung by every knave that has three notes upon his voice. I like to sing alone; but then it must be when the liquor has tuned me to the pitch. Your liquor's a marvellous fine master of singing. When I'm tuned to the pitch, I'd like you to show me the man that can sing better, or the song that's too many for me. Nay, though I know not the air, I'll put one to it. I'll sing them a song—none of your ditties, such as my old master used to grumble.

In love fair Celia fell, O,
With alas! and O! and a well-a-day!
And her love the maid would tell, O,—
Love comes and goes like sun in May!
Above your reach ten feet, O,
With alas! and O! and a well-a-day!
A pear's ten times as sweet, O,—
Love comes and goes like sun in May!
The youth he loved the maid, O,
With alas! and O! and a well-a-day!
But to woo her was afraid, O,—
Love comes and goes like sun in May!
But when her love she told, O,
With alas! and O! and a well-a-day!
His love grew wondrous cold, O,—
Love comes and goes like sun in May!

My moral would you find, O,
 With alas! and O! and a well-a-day!
 No maid should tell her mind, O,—
 Love comes and goes like sun in May!

Enter OLD SMALL as off a Journey.

Old S. I thank thee, fortune! Kind art thou to me!
 He's here! He's here! Why, who should sing that strain
 If not the varlet knave he took with him?
 That can't be he!

Peter. [Aside.] My master's father here!

Old S. Good sir,—

Peter. [Aside.] All's right. He knows me not.

Old S. I pray,

Heard you a strain just now?

Peter. I know not what you call a strain. I heard a varlet trying to play a tune upon his nose, which I could have pulled for him, 'twas so villanously ill done. If you call that a strain, let never man sing a strain to me! I know when I hear a strain. In a strain there is measure of time, which is the main part of it; measure of tune, which is no indifferent part of it; and measure of voice, which, though it rank not with either of the former, is yet allowed to be a part: but here was neither measure of time, tune, nor voice, but measure enough of the lack of them. If playing a tune upon the nose be a strain, why then I heard a strain just now; but whip me if I'd stand to hear such strain again.

Old S. This could never be he.

Peter. [Aside.] He eyes me hard.

Old S. One question more, good sir. What kind of man was he you heard sing?

Peter. What! your nose-tuner? Why, a tolerable sufficient man—nay, a very sufficient man; say he had the dress of one.

Old S. How was he dressed, I pray you?

Peter. Marry, with cap, jerkin, hose, and shoes; but the cap was out at the crown, the jerkin was out at the elbows, the hose were out all over; and as for the shoes, it would tax a conjurer to find out why he wore them, for the uppers were the most that remained of them, and they were out at the toes. Shirt had he none, or he showed it not; doublet had he ever, his jerkin must have eaten it up; for it was a most incontinent one—a devourer of all kinds of cloth—coarse, middle, fine, and superfine! and of all colours, a superlative sample of patch-work, a very nosegay of a jerkin, saving the odour on't. If he was a gentleman, he was a gentleman in jest; if he was a beggar, he was a beggar in earnest. Service he could never have had; for bowels of flesh and blood could not have committed it, to put a human body into such rat's livery.

Old S. My scarecrow Peter, to a certainty.

Enter YOUNG SMALL from the Inn.

Peter. My master! In, sir! in!

Young S. Why, what's the matter ?

Old S. [To PETER.] Worthy sir,—

Peter. Anon—

Young S. My father !

Peter. Fear not,—Knows he not 'tis I.

Young S. Nay, if he finds us out, my fortune's ruined !

Peter. Stay ! and I'll rid you of him in a trice.

Old S. Pray you, what gentleman is that ?

Peter. Gentleman ! Ne'er saw you a lord before ?

Old S. Is he a lord ?

Peter. Is he a lord !—Look at him ! Is he not a lord ? Not your lord mayor, forsooth—a lord to-day, a master to-morrow ; but an every-day lord—a lord, and no thanks to you ; nay, an he halt at the third hob-nail, yet shall he be a lord. Avoid him, or carry your cap in your hand. He takes measure of state upon him. If you take the wall of him, you may chance to take from the wall to the stocks. It happened no later than yesterday ; though, truth to say, the youth was a forward one—one of your care-for-noughts from the city—a fellow that would hector it like a prince, though, six days out of the seven, I warrant you, his father wipes his beard with an apron.

Old S. What ! put he him in the stocks ?

Peter. Ay did he ; and from the stocks into prison, whence if he be not transferred to the gallows, he has more luck than grace.

Old S. How angered he the lord, I pray you ?

Peter. Marry, as I said, he took the wall of him ; whereat the lord commended the wall to his head ; which he not relishing, commended his hand to the lord's cheek ; who thereupon commended his body to the stocks, and thence to the prison ; whence, when he is delivered, 'twill be upon a release in full, signed by the sheriff, and executed by the hangman—for he is a great lord.

Old S. Alack ! so it should seem, sir !—Know you, sir, the name of the youth ?

Peter. I heard it, but have forgotten it, and yet have I a memory ; but 'twas a very patch of a name. One good substantial name would make three such. 'Twas something like Sprat—or—

Old S. 'Twasn't Small ?

Peter. Small was the name !

Old S. Alack, sir, 'tis my son !

Peter. Thy son !—Avoid !—Avoid ! Safety for thee lies hence—here, danger ! Shares he thy blood, and shalt thou not share his punishment ? Would he have transgressed but for thee, who but for thee had never lived to transgress ? Shall he on whom treason is fathered hang, and the father of the traitor go free ? Avoid, I say ! Begone ! Fine awaits thee ! Imprisonment awaits thee ! A halter awaits thee !

Old S. Might I but have speech
Of that fair lord ? Good sir, hast thou his ear ?

Look, here are twenty pieces,—speak for me,
And call them thine!

Peter. 'Twould nought avail!

Old S. Good sir,

I'll make the twenty thirty! Take them, sir!

Good thirty pieces only for a word!

Come, then, I'll make the thirty forty! What!

Won't that suffice? What will, then? Sir, you see

A poor old man that has an only son,

Whom he, in evil hour, let go from him,

Thinking that he could live without him, till

The task he tried, but found too hard a one!

Then choice had none except to follow him,

Or stay at home and die! and here is come

To Romford all the way from London, sir,—

On foot, sir!—Take the forty pieces, sir!—

Nay, then, take fifty!—sixty!—all I have!

And only speak a good word for my son.

Young S. Peter, thou'st spoil'd it all! Ne'er heed! ne'er heed!

Thy son is not to hang. [*Speaking with his back towards* OLD S.]

Old S. O thanks for that!

But he's in prison. Ope the door for him,

Although to close't on me! I'll take his place:

Perhaps, of right, I should. I held the lash

And rein—If he's refractory or rash,

Why is he so, but that I used them not?

He better were, had he been better train'd—

That he's not so, his training bear the blame.

That lies with me. Yet was my fault my love—

My too fond love!—so fond, it could not see

How duty could be harsh and yet be kind.

Young S. Father!

Old S. How!—What!—My son! Ah, Thomas, Thomas,

To pass thee on thy father for a lord!

And who is this? Thou varlet—knave—rank knave!

[*To* PETER.]

Young S. Nay, father, well 'twas meant! Thou comest here

To see great things.

Old S. Is this a sample of them?

What kind of jerkin's that for thee to wear?

'Twould suit a lord! And trunks to match withal,

And doublet! Board and lodging for a life

Thou carri'st on thy back! A cap and plume!

Why, for what cobwebs, Thomas, hast thou changed

Thy father's heavy crowns! What's that I see?

Wear'st thou a rapier too! The end of time

Is come! And thou, thou ape—for nothing good

But tricks! Thou mischief! Evil ne'er at rest!

For whom the hide were clothing good enough!

Are these my savings that so shine on thee?

The which to keep, thy master's back more oft
 Went lacking, than provided! Cap and plume
 For thee!—A halter for thee!—Sirrah! I'll to town
 Again. No hope! No help! Discomfort all!
 Care lost! Love wasted! Thomas, fare thee well!
 I shake thy hand, in bitterness, I do!

I'll strive to live without thee!—To what use?

I tried, and couldn't do't.

[*Falls on his neck.*]

Young S. Take not on so!

Or I'll take on. In sooth I will! I'm not
 A stone—a lump of flint—a piece of steel.

Let our apparel pass—or note it but

For joy!—for very joy! Thou hast a son

That's born to fortune!—to high fortune! Know,

To-day's my wedding day!

Old S. Thy wedding day!

Young S. My wedding day.

Old S. And who's to be thy bride?

Young S. A lady.

Old S. How! Why, wherewithal hast thou
 To keep a lady?

Young S. Keep a lady! No;
 Sufficient 'tis, methinks, I marry her.

My lady shall keep me. How say you now!

My lady's blood! She's one that comes of kin—

That looks for lands and coffers—that is heir

To titles! Wonder not though thou shouldst have

A baron to thy grandson! Close accounts,

And shut up shop!

Old S. I'm all amaze! I'd like
 To see thy bride.

Young S. Thou shalt, but not to speak—
 For, though thy son for gentle state was born,
 Who looks on thee, saw he a counter e'er,
 Bethinks him of a shop; so mightst thou mar
 My fortune.

Old S. Knows she not thy father's calling?
 Thomas! nought prospers like plain-dealing, son!
 But make thy fortune thy own way—thou ne'er
 Wouldst follow mine!

Young S. Content thee, father, that
 My fortune's made! E'en follow us to church;
 But not a word until the knot be tied,
 And I be fast and sure a gentleman!
 Hoo, Kate! Sweet Kate! E'er saw you lady, father?
 You now shall look on one! The form of lady,
 The air of lady—face of lady—yea
 The eyes, nose, mouth, and cheeks of lady. Kate!
 Come forth, my bride!

Kate. [*Coming to the door.*] Who calls?

Young S. Your bridegroom, Kate.
 To church! to church!

Kate. Before my bridemaide comes!

Young S. Thy bridemaide, Kate, is not to marry thee,
But I, and I am here! so loiter not,
The sexton's part is done—the doors are oped!
The clerk is ready with his horn and pen;
The parson's gown'd, and standing by the book;
The merry bells are on the watch to ring—
There want but thee and me; so come to church!

Kate. Without a bridemaide, I should be ashamed!

Young S. How delicate! Your bridemaide yonder comes;
So come, my lady Kate!

Kate. Heigho!

Young S. How sweet!

Lean on me, Kate.

Kate. I fear to take thy arm.

Young S. How elegant! Nay, Kate—

Kate. But if I must—

Young S. How like a lady doth she carry her
In all things! Bear up, Kate; Take courage, Kate!
Come on! Now warrant me a gentleman! [*They go out.*]

Music without.—Enter WILFORD and BELMONT.

Wilf. Love plies the rack on which itself is stretch'd!
Tell it of solace, and 'twill talk of pain,
Which 'tis its piteous profit to augment!
So far unlike, love's merchant is to him
That trades for pelf. He hears his venture's sunk,
And cries, "'Tis gone!"—tries to forget his loss—
Hoists up fresh hope, and launches other freight.
No other freight for him that trades in love!
His venture haply founder'd—no new hope;—
His dreamy day of speculation's done!
His breast hath room for nothing, but the thought
How many fathom deep his treasure lies!
He has no use for life, except to make
Its cheek a feast for comfortless despair;
Nor ever smiles again, except to see
How fast it wastes away!

Bel. The lover's tune!

Wilf. They come to carry her to church! To own
The happy hand she'll take to lead her there,
Would I forego the clasp of Fortune's own,
And all her gifts of rank and wealth refund!

Bel. Yet gave she these in kindness. By their means
Your love might prosper yet. What need you do,
But doff this sordid guise, appear yourself,
And ask and have her?

Wilf. No! not even her
For their deserts!—Myself! What's of myself
That is not here? Call I the prouder suit
I should put on—myself? Call I my title,
No merit of mine own achieved—myself?

They're nought of me but what a knave might wear
 As well as I! My ardent soul's myself!—
 My heart, too proud to be in fortune's debt,
 Where worth, alone, should win—myself! My mind
 That its chief store by nature's riches sets
 With this its vassal case, such as it is—
 Myself!—The only self I'd use or thank
 To win me love or friend! So end my part
 What it began! I'll look once more upon her!

[Retires with BELMONT.]

Enter RALPH and Hostess, meeting.

Hostess. Ralph, where's thy bride?

Ralph. She's in her chamber still.

Hostess. Then bring her forth.

Ralph. She will not come for me.

Hostess. For what

Delays she thus? Her bonnet's trimm'd—Her coif

She has—I sent her in her wedding-gown

An hour ago, I'm certain 'twas a fit!

I'll fetch her forth myself.

[Enters the house.]

Enter YOUNG SMALL and KATE, followed by OLD SMALL and PETER.

Young S. Joy! Give me joy!

Ralph. How, sir;—so soon at church! The knotting done!

Young S. E'en so, good master Ralph!—Father, my bride—

Kate. Thy father!

Young S. Even so, my pretty Kate!

The father of thy Thomas! Let him know

From thy own tongue—nor him, alone, but all men,

The kind of wife his Thomas, whom he thought

A fool—an ass—a ne'er-do-well—hath won.

Kate. And thought thy father ever thus of thee?

Young S. No matter what he thought! Convince him, Kate,

What now, and ever hence, behoves him think.

Father and friends, my wife. Now, Kate, disclose

Thy kin, my Kate—thy kin, my lady Kate?

Kate. Anan?

Young S. Anan! Thy kin?

Kate. Anan?

Young S. Thy kin?

Thy house? thy family? thy pedigree?

Kate. Anan?

Young S. Anan again!

Whence drawest thou thy noble blood, my Kate?

How comest it to thee? Is it by the male

Or female side? The lands thou'rt heiress to—

The titles that shall fall to thee?—In right

Of whom expectest them?

Enter STRAP, half tipsy.

Strap. Fine doings here!

A' wedding! So!—I'll thank you for a knot
For honest master Strap.

Young S. Peace, fellow!—Peace!

The knotting's done.

Strap. O then the bride's a wife.

No doubt, good sirs, you've all had kisses round;
So now my turn is come. Sir, by your leave!

Young S. Out, knave! Thou art full of ale.

Strap. A lucky day

For thee, when thou art full of aught so good!

I say I'll have a kiss.

Young S. What art thou?

Strap. What?

A cobbler.

Young S. What!—A fellow kiss my wife,
That is not master even of a craft!

Strap. That shows thy wisdom! Cobbling is the chief
Of crafts.

Young S. The chief!—You hear him, masters! Chief

Of crafts—I question if the half of one!—

Yea, third of one! A cordiner's a craft;

He makes the shoe, the cobbler only mends,

And so's no better than a patch, a botch,

A nail, a tack, a stitch—A cobbler!—What!

A cobbler kiss my wife!—an awl—a piece

Of wax and packthread—and the bristle of

A hog—and there's a cobbler! Hark thee, Kate?

Couldst bear of such a lout to take a kiss?

No! never common gentlewoman could!

Far less, a dame of title, and by birth.

Strap. Young man, a sober word or two with thee:

Thou'rt drunk, or mad—or both—Thou knowest not

What cobbling is! 'Tis part of every trade,

And the chief part,—No trade but hath its cobbler.

Your law hath cobblers, your divinity,

Your surgery, your physick. There are cobblers

In merchandise and war. Who does not know

What cobblers are there 'mongst your politicians?

If that should be a craft which is most follow'd,

Then cobbling is a craft—Ay, chief of crafts.

Young S. Well hast thou argued it! yet provest thou not
Thy right to kiss my bride!

Strap. Of new-made bride

'Tis right of any one to take a kiss;

So prithee stand aside.—Nay, wilt thou not,

Thou'lt learn, belongs he to a trade or not,

A cobbler is a man! But no—no broil

Upon a wedding-day. That were not like

A cobbler! Come—a bargain, sir—I'll leave it

To your lady.

Young S. Gives she leave, you're welcome, sir—
Small likelihood of that!

Strap. Fair lady!—what!
Slut! hussy! vixen! wanton! cockatrice!

Young S. How, knave?

Strap. Knave!—She's the knave! Prevent me not.

I'll call her what I list, sir—What I list

I'll do to her. [*Embraces her.*] Make rosin of her!—**pack-**
thread!

Nail her unto a last, for bridegroom!—Take

Strap, hammer, pincers to her!—turn her

Into thongs and shoe-strings!—Wherefore should I not,

That am her father!

Young S. What?

Strap. O run-away!

Oh, vixen! mad-cap! Oh, my daughter, Kate,

And have I found thee?

Kate. Father, I'm married—

And married unto a gentleman!

Strap. [*Seeing OLD SMALL.*] Odzooks!

Good master Small!—Factor of minikins

And corking-pins—of pins of all degrees!—

Hearing that thou hadst traced thy thriftless child

To Romford here, and having lost my own,

Good fortune put it in my crazy pate

To follow thee,—and lo! what speed I've come!

My daughter's found—and doubly found!—She says

She's married to a gentleman!—Hast found

Thy son?

Old S. Yes, master Strap, he's there.

Strap. This he!

So, sirrah! jackanapes! And have I craved

Thy leave to kiss thy bride? Scorn'st thou me now?

And if thou dost, thou art my son-in-law—

Yea, thou art married to a cobbler's daughter.

But what of that? If not a gentleman,

A cobbler is the king of jolly fellows!

Ralph. Kate! shall I now doff cap unto thy spouse?

Kate. Yes; if thou dost what fits thee, best, to do.

Ralph. Thy gentleman hath dwindled to a pin!

Kate. A pin that's worth a bush of thorns, like thee!

Ralph. Give you much joy, good sir! You've wed your match;

Who doubts it, let him!—I will swear thy bride

A lady—much as thou'rt a gentleman!

Nay, frown not—

[*Good-humouredly.*

Young S. Frown! who ever saw me frown?

I have lost all day at loggats, and I'd thank

The man, could say, he ever saw me frown!

Come, Kate!—Come, fathers both.

Kate. Wilt take me, sir?

Young S. Take thee! Have I not taken thee? I will—

And keep thee too, so thou wilt let me, Kate.

[*YOUNG SMALL, KATE, OLD SMALL, STRAP, and
PETER retire.*

Enter Hostess from house.

Hostess. I vow the girl's bewilder'd! "Yes" and "no,"
And "no" and "yes," are all you get from her!
Nor, yet, will she come forth.—Is that her step?
It is. She comes.

Enter BESS, dressed as the Beggar's Daughter.

Why, Bess, are you not dress'd?
In trim like that went ever bride to church?

Ralph. Trim good enough for me. Come then, my bride;
Come, pretty Bess! Your hand to go to church!

Bess. I go not, sir, a bride, to church with you.

Wilf. [*Aside.*] Hope, hearty friend! art thou come back
to me!

I see thee, yet can scarce believe I do,
So sure I thought we had for ever parted!
Welcome, O welcome!

Hostess. Gavest thou not consent
To marry Ralph?

Bess. Consent I could not give!
Your heart imagined, only, what it wish'd,
In single, earnest generosity!
The hand he covets, others' rights demand
Disposal of—I have parents.

Ralph. Where are they?

Bess. Alas! I know not; but I go to seek them!

Ralph. Who are thy parents then, my pretty Bess?
Tell me, sweet Bess?

Hostess. Sweet Bess, thy father's name?

Ralph. What is thy father?

Bess. The Blind Beggar, sir,
Of Bethnal Green.

Young S. You see I might have wed
A beggar, father. Give me praise for that,
My Kate, a kiss! Come to our wedding cheer!

[YOUNG SMALL, KATE, OLD SMALL, STRAP, and
PETER go out.]

Ralph. Sweet Bess, hadst thou for father, craftsman low
As low can be, I should be well content
To call him father, too; a beggar, though,
Is father none for me. [RALPH goes out.]

Hostess. Hold up thy head,
My pretty Bess! Thou'rt bride too good for him!
Above his mark! Shame on them! shame! I would
I knew the man were worth thee, Bess.

Wilf. What kind
Of man were he?

Hostess. Why, likely, such as thou,
For looks!—Though I've seen better.—Met we not
Before?—'Amerecy!—Yesternight we did,
When thou wast raving of knells, and wedding-bells!

For love of Bess! Art now in raving mood?
Or have thy wits, last night, a roaming gone,
Return'd with this fair morning? Come, confess,
Thou'rt brother to my son!

Wilf. Of none, good dame,
Who slight that maid!

Hostess. What! wouldst thou take her, then?

Wilf. Not take her, dame!

Hostess. I knew't.

Wilf. You're over quick!

You stop my speech, nor know the way 'twould run!

Hostess. 'Twould run? It runs, I wot, no other way
Than that of half thy sex, when they find out
A woman's dower's herself!

Wilf. You wrong me, dame!

Hostess. Why, said you not you would not take the maid?

Wilf. I grant I did; but—

Hostess. But! Give me no buts!

Say downright no at once!—"but this—but that;
You love us—but! You'd wed us—but!" As much
You'd love as you would wed! You'd wed, be sure,
If sure you loved! Yet you *do* love, you say,
But cannot wed,—and love, indeed you do;
But—in your own coin, to be quits with you,
You love her not for herself!

Wilf. I' faith, not so!

And to convince you that your thought doth hold
The counter-course to that my wishes steer,
I'll say I'd take the maid; but—

Hostess. There!

Wilf. Nay, peace!

Thwart not my soul, of which to judge the love,
Thou must partaker of its essence be.
Take her!—Take fortune, honours, fame!—They're things
We hunt for!—They're the eager chase that so
Inspirits us,—despite its length, its stops,
Its perils, its escapes, and accidents,—
We keep it up with cheer!—and what are these
To this excell'ing maid?—I would not *take*—
For that were to suppose a thing obtain'd,
Untoil'd, and unadventured for—I'd win her!

Hostess. And worthy were to win! How say you, Bess?
Wilt thou to church be led by him? Nor "no,"
Nor "yes?" I marvel what a maid would say,
Who, when she's ask'd to church, but hangs her head!
Is't "no?"—"No," Bess?—An angel to a crown
'Tis "no!" but "no" to "no," that answers "no."
Sweet Bess, hadst e'er thy fortune read to thee?
Show me thy hand. How white a thing it is!
What's here? Here's line, and line, and ne'er a cross—
A lucky hand! Look! Saw you e'er the like?
Methinks this hand betokeneth a maid

Not like to wed—for wedlock's still, you know,
The cross of womankind! She'll never wed!
You think she will, I see, and doubt my skill?
Then try your own, and read the hand yourself.

[*Puts Bess's hand into WILFORD's.*]

Wilf. This precious hand, had I the skill to read,
Great as the will, and nuptials it foretold,
Ne'er destined e'er be mine, I'd wish it well!
Though what built up its hope, made wreck of mine!
If adverse was its promise!—lucklessness
Through life,—unpurchased foes,—unstable friends,—
Afflictions,—beggary, in all—but love—
And I the one to keep thee rich in that!—
'Fore hands, with fortune's fairest pledges writ,
I'd covet thine, and for that only gift,
Compound for all beside! Didst press my hand?
Thou didst!—Thou didst!—Deny it not, while stands
That glowing witness on thy modest cheek,
To back my tongue! Love's joyous day is come!
And that's the dawn, or never yet did beam
His golden sun on earth! And I to be
Its harbinger to her! Come, let us seek
Thy parents! Rich enough are they for me,
Whose blessing leaves me not a wish to bless!

LORD THOMAS WILLOUGHBY *enters with Attendants.*

Will. 'Tis she! For once hath rumour spoken truth!

[*Aside.*]

Base hind, forbear, nor lock thy arms on one
Thy knee were much too graced to wait upon—
And straight resign to me my peerless bride;
For know, whom thou esteem'st a beggar's child,
Is daughter to a baron of descent,
The highest in the land.

Wilf. A baron's child!
And bride of thine!

Bess. Oh, no!—No baron's child!
My father is a wandering beggar-man!
I would not be a baron's child:—yea, child
Unto a king—and least of all be bride to him!

Will. I swear thou art a baron's child;—I swear
Thou art my bride;—Such gives thee out the tongue,
Whose word is law, 'twere treason to dispute!

Wilf. What say'st thou, Bess?

Bess. I'm bride to none but thee!
Thou that wouldst wed me, though a beggar's child,
Were I a baron's child, shouldst wed me still!
Take mind for mind, and heart for heart from me!
I saw thee, and I loved thee!—Grows my tongue
Too bold?—Forgive it for the bashfulness
That could not pay thy love with one poor word,
Until another dared dispute with thee

What eye, and ear, and heart, and soul, and all
 Bear witness is thine own!—Where are thine arms?
 Or didst thou mock me, calling me their treasure?

[WILFORD clasps her in his arms.]

Will. [*Drawing his sword.*] Forbear, I say!—Thy life's in jeopardy!

Lo! the commands of her whose will behoves
 The proudest not to question.

[*Gives a paper.*]

Wilf. [*Reading.*] What, to thee!
 Convicted here of violence,

Offer'd to her, thou now wouldst make thy bride!

Not for the queen will I resign her to thee. [*Drawing too.*]

Will. You talk it mightily!

Wilf. I'll do it too.

Look you,—a man will let one take his life,
 Ere he'll give up his purse, and that, perhaps,
 Will hold a score of crowns! It hath been done
 For less! Come, state the sum thou'dst set against her!
 What's its amount? Come, name't. Couldst borrow it
 From usury? Couldst find it in the mint?
 In that which feeds the mint—the unwasting mine?
 Couldst eke it out with diamonds, and the rest
 Of all the brood of gems? Couldst fancy it?—
 And shall I give her up, that have the right
 To keep her? Never with my will! She's mine!
 You see she is! You see her choice no less
 Holds her to me, than do the arms, my soul,
 With force of thousand arms, now locks upon her.
 Advance an inch, thy life's not worth a straw!

Hostess. A spark! A spark among a thousand! Take
 His word, good sir, he's one that says and does!

The man for me I'd wed, were I a maid! [*Music without.*]

Will. Abide the cost of your rebellion, slave!
 The queen herself is here!

[*March. Procession as before: QUEEN, &c. QUEEN dismounts.*]

Queen. Ha, swords without their cases! Who is she
 That so our vision dazzles, distancing
 All it hath seen of nature's cunning'st fairness?
 Ha!—You that have the charge of him, lead forth
 The Beggar of Bethnal Green.

Bess. My parents!

Al. and Emma. Bess!

Queen. I knew it must be she. Hast found her, sir?
 The star that look'd upon thy birth was fair;
 For, had she been, indeed, a beggar's child,
 She yet had been thy bride. The truant ring
 That late betray'd thee, still was faithful to thee!
 This hour, your nuptials shall be solemnized!

Bel. Contain thyself!—Her hand she'll never give.

Wilf. Does she—she may! Refuses she, let him
 That dares, attempt to take it!

Hostess. Hold to that;
I would were I a man!

Queen. Yet,—ere we tax
The labour of the priest,—her parents' rank,
To me and to this lord, alone, divulged,
Befits it others know. That document
Which to our hand her father late confided,

[*To Attendant. Paper is brought, QUEEN reads.*
Lord Woodville read; and say, concerns thee aught
This history? [*Giving him the paper.*

Wood. It does! If truth it speaks—
Which doubt I not—the beggar is my brother;
A brother, who, when living, ne'er from me
Received a brother's right, but hate for love;
And yet whose death to love converted hate.

Alb. Octavius!

Wood. Albert!

Alb. Brother!

Wood. O forgive,
And with thy lands receive thy brother back! [*They embrace.*

Queen. My chaplain, ho!

Come tie the knot!

Wilf. I have a feeling now
Of what it is to die—the heavy pause,
Ere life goes out!

Queen. What wait you for, sir priest?

Chaplain. Her hand to give, the maid refuses.

Queen. How!

Wilf. She does! She's true! She's mine!

Queen. Who's he that speaks?

Wood. A peasant, please your majesty!

Will. A hind,
Your grace, who claims my bride!

Wilf. Thy bride? She's mine!
Prize of my love, proud lord! that coveted
Her love when she was low, as now she's high,
And won it!—won it!—won, what all thy gold,
Thy lands, thy honours, thy alliances,
Could never win for thee!—what, peasant as
I am, makes me the peer, that would not change
Condition with thee, wast thou twice as high!

Hostess. A spark to win a woman!

Will. Villain, hence.

Wilf. Proud lord, I fling the foul term back at thee!
Nor call thee villain mere, but traitor foul!
Who knew'st thy mistress was a virgin queen,
Yet strovest to rob a virgin of her pride,
By villain force! Ha! do I make thee blench?
Cower'st thou before me, peasant though I am?
Has not the blood of all thy noble line
The power to hearten thee, and make thee stand
Erect in presence of the nameless brow

That's bent upon thee with an honest scowl?
 Command'st me hence?—Hence rather thou, and learn
 Whose merits, mean, behind their titles lag
 Were better go undubb'd,—whilst lowest hind
 That's lord of noble deed, is lord enough!

Queen. Secure that hind who dares to brave a lord.

Bess. O great and royal mistress! rate him not
 By what he seems. If nature marketh blood,
 Then is the peasant of condition fair,
 As any in your court!—If to be high—
 If to be truly gentle—be to shine;
 In valiant bearing, generosity,
 Love, which the eye of fortune follows not
 For guidance where to smile,—a noble and
 The noblest noble should the peasant be!
 O sovereign, gracious, that art mistress of
 A woman's costliest heart, look down on mine,
 Which through mine eyes looks humbly up to thee!
 And let me not for bankrupt pass in love,
 Disinterestedness, and constancy,
 With all the means and all the will to pay!
 Give him the baron's daughter, who would take
 The beggar's child to wife!

Queen. It must not be!

Al. Most gracious queen, a picture wears my child,
 The likeness of her father ta'en in his youth;
 Command her show it you.

Queen. That picture, girl! [*Bess gives the picture.*]
 Feature for feature 'tis the peasant's own!—
 A light breaks in upon me—My Lord Woodville,
 Where is that truant son of thine, we wont
 In sport to dub our hero of romance?

Wood. Your grace, an age it is since I have seen him.

Queen. Enough! a pretty masque it is, they play! [*To Bess.*]
 I'll try the mettle of her constancy.

Give me this bauble, and that other one
 Thou wearest in thy heart, throw far from it;
 For, by our title to the crown we wear,
 We vow no peasant e'er shall call thee wife!

Bess. Recall—Recall the vow!

Queen. Recall thy heart,
 If thou hast given it him.

Bess. I cannot do't.

Queen. No?

Bess. No! He is its owner—master—lord!
 Yes, I avow it, peasant though he is!
 I could not take it from him, if I would!
 I would not were he less, if less could be!
 No, not to give it to the proudest he
 That glitters in your court!

Al. Oh, thwart her not,
 Most gracious mistress,—From adversity

I've learn'd instruction, makes me venerate
 Deeds more than circumstances. His approve
 That much he loves my child—Her heart is his.
 I would not from her heart her hand disjoin,
 For gain of all the world!

Queen. He dies for this!

Nay, gasp not, maid! 'Tis but the peasant dies,
 To give thee, in a baron's noble heir,
 The lover whom thy constancy hath won!—
 Whose constancy hath rich reward in thee.
 Young lord, thou see'st how fortune, to revenge
 The wrong thou wouldst have done this noble maid,
 When thou esteemd'st her of low degree,
 Now that she proves fit partner for thy bed,
 Consigns her to another's worthier arms! [*To LORD THOMAS.*
 We pardon thee thy trespasses, atoned
 By loss of sight, and long privations borne. [*To ALBERT.*
 Lord Woodville, join thy niece to thine own son,
 For there indeed he stands; and greetings spare,
 Until we see their nuptials solemnized;
 Which we ourselves under our conduct take.
 Pageant and masque shall grace their wedding-day,
 And poets vie while they rehearse the tale
 Of Bess, the beggar's maid of Bethnal Green!

END OF THE BEGGAR OF BETHNAL GREEN.





THE DAUGHTER:
A Play.

TO JOHN GARDNER, ESQ.

(LATE OF GLASGOW, NOW OF APALACHICOLA, IN WEST FLORIDA.)

MY DEAR JOHN,

Accept the Dedication of this Play, as a small
acknowledgment of a large debt of Friendship.

Yours gratefully,

and affectionately,

JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES.

LONDON,
29th November, 1838.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

(AS ORIGINALLY PERFORMED AT DRURY LANE IN 1836.)

<i>Robert</i>	(Father to Marian)	Mr. KNOWLES.
<i>Norris</i>		Mr. WARDE.
<i>Wolf</i>	(Friend to Norris)	Mr. DIDDEAR.
<i>Edward</i>	(In love with Marian) ..	Mr. COOPER.
<i>Clergyman</i>		Mr. MATTHEWS.
<i>Philip</i>	{ (Wreckers)	Mr. BAKER.
<i>Ambrose</i> ..		Mr. F. COOKE.
<i>Stephen</i>		Mr. BRINDAL.
<i>Jailer</i>		Mr. HENRY.
<i>Constable</i>		Mr. FENTON.
<i>Bailiff</i>		Mr. MEARS.
<i>Marian</i>	(In love with Edward)	Miss HUDDART.

SCENE—THE COAST OF CORNWALL.

THE DAUGHTER.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Shore on the Coast of Cornwall.*

Enter PHILIP, AMBROSE, and others.

Phil. Our craft is scandalized! We strip the dead!
But what of that? The dead but want a grave!
We give it them. We take what they can spare.

Amb. You're right; we do no more!

Phil. As to the rights
Of the living, whom they leave behind, let men
Look to their own! If not, why let it go!
Is it for us to stand the drenching rain!
Wade to our necks into the sea! perhaps
Take boat and pull among the breakers, at
The peril, every moment, of our lives,
For their behoof, while they lie snug in bed,
Loll o'er their fires, or sit around their feasts?
Methinks there's reason in the wrecker's trade!

Amb. There is. He risks, and toils, for what he gets.

Phil. But then he does no mischief to the dead,
More than the waves have done!—and if there be
Among us, one that does, he's not of us.
Those marks of violence, which hands alone,
Not rocks, and waves, that have not hands, can leave,
Are scandal to our name!

Amb. 'Tis clear, foul play
Has oft of late been done, and chiefly there

Enter NORRIS.

Where Norris takes his stand! What right has he
To make that reef his own?

Nor. Who talks of me?
What of Black Norris?—Humph!—You envy him!
“What right has he to make that reef his own?”
The right you all would stand on, if you could—
The right of might!

Phil. Who thought of seeing him?
Who dream'd that he was near?

Nor. I am a dark
And surly man!—Am I the worse for that?
May not the heart that's here, be soft as yours?

The man that's ever smiling, still speaks soft—
 And no one here would pass for such a man—
 I'd never trust! He'll prove a hypocrite!
 The sky doth change its 'haviour—'tis no rogue;
 And why not man that lives beneath the sky,
 If he be honest? Marks of violence
 On bodies wash'd ashore! You want to know
 How they came there? I'll tell you—Why, by hands!
 Is not that frank?—I'll tell you something more—
 'Twas not by mine. It follows not, because
 The hair is rough, the dog's a savage one!

Amb. 'Tis true.

Nor. Come, come, hang no man for his looks!
 The thing's disgrace! Let's put a stop to it;
 And each man do his best, to find him out,
 That brings the shame upon us—be it me,
 Or you, or him, or whomsoe'er it may;
 And hunt him not by looks! Such hounds—you know
 What hounds are, I suppose—are oft at fault!
 Sleek looks may be companions to rough hearts!
 I have found it many a time! As for the reef
 You say I make my own—you're welcome to it!
 But take it if you dare. *[Aside—goes out.]*

Amb. We've done him wrong.

Phil. I know not.

Amb. Think the best! Come; in the end
 It may be as he says. Whate'er we've thought,
 No guilt has been brought home to him—although
 His father is no better than he should be,
 And sees far lands, by favour of the law.
 Let's keep awake! Each think the watch his own!
 Whispers grow loud, and we must silence them,
 Else we'll be look'd to, and our trade at end!
[They go out on different sides.]

SCENE II.—*Cliffs—with the Shore in the Distance—A Ship in the Offing.*

Enter EDWARD and MARIAN, hand in hand.

Edw. Look blithe, my pretty Marian! The true heart
 Should ne'er be a misgiving one!—My girl,
 My gentle girl, look blithe—Didst ever see
 So fair a day?—There's scarce a cloud in sight!
 The breeze is just the one our vessel likes;
 Jib, spanker, all will draw! Tight-water boat,
 Stanch crew, bold captain,—Marian, what's to fear?
Mari. Absence, that gives to lovers taste of death,
 And long protracted makes them wish for death,
 So wearisome to bear! When last you left,
 So long you stay'd,—life, from a precious gift,

Became a load, methought I could lay down,
 Nor deem it loss, but gain!—my constant thought,
 How time still broke his promise, day by day,
 To bring thee back to me. Oh! of the sighs
 I have heaved in an hour I could have found a wind,
 Had I the cunning to make store of them,
 Would cause thy ship to heel! There have I sat,
 From coming in to going out of light,
 Perch'd, like a lonely beacon, on the cliff,
 Watching for thee;—and if I saw a speck,
 I thought thee there; and, when it pass'd away,
 I felt the pangs of parting o'er again!—
 How long wilt be away?

Edw. A month.

Mari. Say two!

I'll make my mind up to two months—and then,
 If thou return'st before the time, thou know'st
 It will be usury of happiness!
 Thou'lt stay two months!—Two months is a long time!

Edw. I tell thee but a month!

Mari. I'll not believe it;

For, if I should, and thou beyond shouldst stay,
 Each hour beyond will be another month!

So, for my two months, I may pine two-score!

Nay, for two months I will not look for thee!

Edw. And then we marry!

Mari. So my father says.

Edw. O Marian, when thou'rt mine!

Mari. Thou wilt not go

Again to sea.

Edw. No, girl!—Another trip,

We are rich enough! How love hath made us wise!

When boy and girl, we talk'd as man and wife;

And 'gan to hoard 'gainst days of housekeeping.

Our first small venture—what a heap it brought!

Its value more than ten times doubled! 'Twas

That Heaven did bless it!—Marian, that's the luck!

And since that lucky day, whate'er we've tried

Has thriven with us still.

Mari. Thank Heaven, it has.

Edw. Ay!—And the saint who taught me, on her knee,

"No life so happy as an honest one!"—

Thy mother!—Thy dear mother, Marian.—

Mari. She loved thee!

Edw. Yes!—What were a wrecker's gains

Compared to ours? To think that they're our own!

None to dispute them with us!—No, not e'en

A dead man's bones! I have kept my watch, on deck,

In a gale, the billows higher than our cliffs;

That, looking from their tops, you wonder'd how

The vessel could go down, and rise again;

While, as she heel'd until her yard-arms duck'd,

You thought each moment shrowd and brace would crack,
 And every mast at once go overboard!—
 Thus have I kept my watch; and then I've found
 The best of treasures was a conscience, clear!
 And with my venture in my chest below,
 Would not have changed that slanting, creaking deck,
 To take the wrecker's station on the shore,
 With wind and wave at work, and breaking up
 A fast and rich galleon! Marian,
 Why dost thou hang thy head?

Mari. My father is
 A wrecker.

Edw. So was mine, my Marian.
 What then? We're not the children of their trade!
 Pass but another month—Well, I'll say two—
 And change of state shall bring us change of scene!
 We'll quit these haunts, and ply some inland calling!
 Why turn'st thou pale, my girl? What frightens thee?
 I only see Black Norris—Fear'st thou him?
Mari. Yes!—No!—I fear, yet know not cause to fear—
 No just cause!—Yet—Thank Heaven he's gone again!

Edw. He dared offend thee once, but paid the forfeit;
 And durst not offer wrong to thee again!
 Hast other cause to fear him, Marian?

Mari. When last you were at sea, the weary nights
 Thy mother and thy Marian beguiled,
 As ever in thy absence they were wont,
 With talk of thee; and growing sad with that,
 Old tales of marvel, from her ample store,
 The kindly dame would tell—Peace to her spirit!—
 I shall not have her now to comfort me!

Edw. Don't speak of that! Go on.

Mari. One dreary night,
 A wrecker was the story—banish'd son,
 And worse than banish'd father! that watching was
 A vessel fast upon the Goodwin Sands—

Edw. I know!—The body of a man was wash'd
 Ashore. The wrecker fell to rifling it,
 But life was in the body.

Mari. That's the tale.
 The wrecker heard him groan—so, conscience-wrung,
 The wretch confess'd—and to secure his prey,
 Destroy'd what Heaven had bade the tempest spare;
 Stopp'd with his hands the holy breath of life,
 And watching, for assurance that the work
 Of foulest sin was done, by the wild glare
 Of the lightning, which, that moment, rent the clouds,
 And lighted up the ghastly scene of blood,
 Beheld the feature of his banish'd boy,
 On his own beach, by his own father murder'd.

Echo. But what hath this to do with him, the sight
 Of whom recall'd the tale?

Mari. His father is
A convict, serving in a distant land.
His term of shame, almost expired; for crime
Done on the storm-strewn shore.

Edw. I know he is.

Mari. I mused on them, as by thy mother's hearth
I sat; which soon, methought, began to spread
Into our bay—a furious tempest on,—
Men, women, children watching here and there,
On the look-out for some unlucky barque.
Its wrath might catch, and strand upon the shore!
There was the lightning, and the thunder, and
The rain and wind, and rattling shingles, as
The billows, mountain high, came tumbling in,
And there stood Norris, on that reef of his.

Edw. Go on, as 'twere a real tale thou told'st,
Thou fixest me, with eagerness to hear.

Mari. Then came a vessel—a huge hulk—without
A single mast left standing!—Such a one
Was wreck'd upon the coast three winters gone,
When thou wast far at sea—I witness'd it.

Edw. Well; but the ship you fancied?

Mari. Long she heaved,
And sank, and reel'd, until at last she struck
Right on the wrecker's reef; where soon she went
To pieces.—Then, the body of a man
Was wash'd on shore, and Norris sprang upon it;
But life, as in the story I had heard,
Was in it still; and Norris took that life!
He stabb'd the shipwreck'd man—and lo! it was
His father!—In my sleep I dream'd, that night
The self-same thing. And often, since, in sleep,
Ay, and in waking too, have seen't again—
Have seen the bay, the tempest, and the ship;
The body floating in, and Norris there,
Rifling it of its life—the body of
His father! Strange things have been thought of
him;

And never look I on that scowling man,
But with the thought, I see a murderer!—
But thou art going, and I talk of him!
I know not wherefore, but I never felt
So sad before at parting!

Edw. Fear'st for me?

Mari. No!—Thou art good—Hast trust in Heaven
—implorest

Its mercy night and morn! 'Twill show it thee!
Thou'lt find it 'mid the tempest—near the shoal
Off the lee-shore!—or, if thy vessel strike,
Or founder, surer than the sea-bird's wing,
The sea-bird, it will float thee 'bove the wave,
And bear thee to thy native cliff again!

I have no fears for thee!—I think—I know
Thou wilt come back to me! Thou hast no fears?

Edw. None, Marian!

Mari. But thou hast!—I'm sure thou hast!
I see a trouble in thy face!—I do!
Thou fear'st for something!—What is it?

Edw. I would

Thou hadst not told me of Black Norris.

Mari. Why?

See'st aught in what I told thee?—Dost thou think
My dream bodes ill?—that something's sure to come?
Think'st thou there's aught in dreams? Don't answer me!
I don't believe there is!

Edw. There is not, girl!

Mari. Why wish, then, what thou didst?

Edw. He gives thee pain.

Mari. I will not see him again! I nothing see
When thou'rt away. The sun, the earth, the sea—
All things without are gone—I have no eye,
No ear—except within—within, where, only,
Then, can I see and hear thee!—where I'm with thee
At sea—ashore—and oft in hardest strait
Of peril—where I'm always close to thee,
With superhuman power to bear thee through,
In spite of wildest danger! There's the gun!

Edw. Farewell!—

Mari. I'll see thee to the beach!—I will—
Ay, to the water's edge! That I could go
Along with thee!—The waves might rise and roar,
I would not hear or see them!—Come!

Edw. Nay, here

We'll part—my messmates, girl, will laugh at thee.

Mari. Let them! What! lose a minute—with an age
To come, of absence—I, that would brave the sea
To go with thee, heed those its surges toss!
I'll go with thee e'en to the water's edge!
And then mine eyes shall go along with thee!
And when thou leavest them, and they give o'er,
My thoughts—my heart—my soul—which water, land,
Air, nothing 'neath the sun can tear thee from! [*They go out.*]

SCENE III.—*The inside of ROBERT's Cottage. ROBERT seated in the centre, occupied in splicing an oar.*

Enter STEPHEN—a lad.

Rob. Well, Stephen! what of the ship?

Ste. She's under way

With every yard of canvas spread.

Rob. The wind

Is fair?

Ste. A point, or more, abaft the beam ;
A gentle breeze, and steady.

Rob. So it seems.

'Twill change ere night !

Ste. I see no signs of it.

Rob. You do not know them when you see them, Stephen !

Though a good sailor, you're a young one yet !

But I'm an old acquaintance of the weather.

"A point," you say, "or more, abaft the beam ?"

Then is the vane north-west. Ne'er heed the vane,

Look ever to the cloud, the weathercock

Behoves the shipman heed, which tells what wind

Will come. How steers the cloud ?

Ste. North-west.

Rob. That's right

Against the ship which now sails with the wind !

Now mark my words ! Ere night the wind will take

Her merry sails aback, and talk to her !

And bid her clew her gay topgallants up !

There will be call for reefs, and work for sheets

And halyards ! "Fore-sheet, fore-top-bowling !"

Will keep throughout the night a busy watch !

But she'll have sea-room, and no gull more safe

Sitteth the wave than she. Here ! Lend a hand.

[STEPHEN goes to ROBERT and assists him.

Where's Marian ?

Ste. I left her on the beach

Following the 'parting ship with all her eyes !

I call'd to her—The sands on which she stood

Had ears as much as she !—She heard me not.

I turn'd to note if she were following me—

As well expect the sea !—It moved, but she

Stood still, in plight as sad, as barque that's driven

Upon a quicksand, settling fast, and sure

Never to come away !

Rob. Her mother's vein

Is in the girl !—So fond a wife was she,

That marriage, which with most is end of love,

With me was only the beginning on't !—

She had been early sent to school—remain'd there

Till she could teach where first she had been taught.

You see the girl she made my Marian !

She made me good, for she was goodness' self ;

Reclaim'd me from a wrecker, for a time ;

But evil habits, Stephen, like old sores,

Are seldom safe from breaking out again !

One night arose the cry "A ship on shore !"

I had been out carousing at a wedding—

The love of my old trade came strong upon me—

Down to the beach I flew, and fell to work,

Unconscious that she follow'd ! Three whole hours

Remain'd she standing in the pelting storm !

I found her with the blood wash'd out of her,
 White as our cliff—cold, stiff, and motionless !
 My ill-got spoil I soon exchanged for her,
 Nor set her down till in our bed I laid her—
 But Heaven well knew she was too good for me ;
 For from that bed she never rose again !

[*Turns from STEPHEN.*]

What of the ship ?—Go to the door and see !

Ste. She's hull down.

Rob. Any other sail in sight ?

Ste. Three to the westward.

Rob. Up or down channel ?—which ?

Ste. Up channel do they bear.

Rob. One of the three

May come ashore to-night.

Ste. The ship has changed

Her course !

Rob. The wind has changed !—'Tis right ahead !

She's on the larboard tack—Is it not so ?

Ste. It is.

Rob. It looks thick weather round the ship,

Does n't it ?

Ste. Yes.

Rob. And 'twill grow thicker ! Storm

Is in the air, though here 'tis sunshine still.

I feel it ! It will blow great guns to-night !

The scud will gallop and the waves will leap !

A cloud has just come o'er the sun. What kind

Of cloud ?

Ste. A streaky one, and black and low,

Stretching from east to west, and in its wake

A fleet of others.

Rob. To be sure !—I know it,

As well as you that see it.—Get my axe,

Boat-hook, and grapple—Lay them here beside me.

[*STEPHEN goes out and returns with the things.*]

A storm is coming on from the south-east,

Right from the sea—full on the shore ! The ship

Is lost that keeps not a good offing, for

The sea, in such a wind as cometh on,

Rolls in like a spring tide, and surely sweeps

Into our bay the unwary barque, that hugs

This iron-bound inhospitable shore !

What offing keep the ships ?

Ste. Two miles, the first,

And more.

Rob. She's safe. The second ?

Ste. Scarce a mile.

Rob. She'll have her work to do, to clear the bay ?

Behoves her to sail well upon a wind !

Lie high ! be lively in her stays ! The third ?

Ste. Not half a mile. The first ship is about !

Rob. The wind has come to her! That's the new wind
I told you of!—the wind that brings the storm!
Will make the tackle sing! the bulkheads creak!
Try braces, shrowds and all! The very wind
For the wrecker! I could tell 't at one o'clock!

Ste. The second ship is now about.

Rob. She is?

Ste. And bearing from the land. The third ship—

Rob. Ay?

Well, what of her?—Is she about too?

Ste. No,

She misses stays! They ware her!

Rob. Is she deep?

Ste. She is.

Rob. Within the head?

Ste. Within the head.

Rob. How far?

Ste. A quarter of a mile.

Rob. A wreck!

Sure as she's now afloat!

Ste. Here's Marian.

Enter MARIAN, abstracted.

Rob. My Marian! My child! Her thoughts are still
Upon her lover's ship. How does my girl?

Mari. [*Coming to herself, and running to ROBERT.*]
Well, father, well!—What have you there? Your axe,
Boat-hook, and grapple! Ah!—a storm is coming!
You're for the shore again!—the heartless shore,
That spares nor ship nor shipman!

Rob. Did it lighten?

Ste. It did.

[*ROBERT rises and takes up his wrecker's implements.*]

Mari. Stay, father, stay! Sit down again
And listen to me.

Rob. [*Resuming his seat.*] Well?

Mari. How canst thou bear
To strip the seaman, whom the winds may strip—
The waves—the rocks—which know not what they do;
But thou dost know, and ought'st to feel! To live
Upon the plunder of the elements!
The havoc of whose fury it should be
Thy labour to repair! The drowning man
Forgot, to get possession of the mite
For which he bides the perils of the sea!
And, if he sinks, is not his bubbling breath—
That calls upon the friends he leaves behind—
A testament, more strong than pen can write,
To make assurance unto those he loves
Of aught the billows spare? Thy boat-hook drops—
Give me thy axe.

Ste. The storm is on! It thunders!

Mari. It is the voice of Heaven in anger !—calls
 On men for pity to each other—each
 Alike in peril placed !—Let go thy axe !
 Think of the axe that's lifted now above
 And falling fast !—might it not light on thee ?
 Let go thy axe !—O the poor ship—poor crew !
 That hear the thunder which the ship hears not !
 O their poor wives ! poor children ! and poor friends !
 That pray this hour some help may be at hand !
 Hear me, my father ! Have not you a child ?
 Were you at sea !—were you within that ship !
 Give me your axe—and now that coil of rope—
 Your grapple—give it me !

Ste. A gun !

Rob. It is

The signal of distress.

Mari. Thy grapple, father !

Rob. I tell thee, Marian, not a soul can live
 In such a sea as boils within our bay.

Mari. And shouldst thou therefore strip the drownéd man ?

O ! at his death-bed, by the side of which
 No friend can stand, there is a solitude
 Which makes the grave itself society !—
 Helplessness, in comparison with which
 An ordinary death is kin to life !
 And silence, which the bosom could fill up
 With thoughts more aching, sad, and desolate
 Than ever utter'd wailing tongues of friends
 Collected round the bier of one beloved !—
 To rifle him ! purloin his little stock
 Of gold, or jewels, or apparel !—take
 And use it as thine own !—thou !—thou ! whom Heaven
 Permits to see the sun that's set to him ;
 And treasure ten times dearer than the sun,
 Which he shall never see !—O touch it not !
 Or if thou touch it—drop it, and fall down
 Upon thy knees, at thought of what he was,
 And thou, through grace, art still !

Rob. Her mother's voice !

Her mother's words !—Here, take the coil !—Put by
 My boat-hook and my axe !—My Marian,
 I'll not go to the beach !

Mari. [*Having laid the things by.*] Heaven guard his ship !

Rob. Thy lover's ?—Fear not ! She has sea-room !—She's
 A bird upon the sea !

Mari. I am weary, father !

Rob. Go to thy bed—Thou art mind and body-worn !

Mari. I will ! You'll mind !

Rob. I will, my Marian.

[*MARIAN goes out.*]

Ste. Another gun !

Rob. And nearer than the first !
 She's driving in apace !—Who pass'd the door ?

Ste. Black Norris.

Rob. He will make a mint to-night!

Ste. She takes the ground!—Her masts are overboard!
[*Runs out.*]

Rob. Black Norris will not spare, and why should I?
The waves won't spare, and why should he or I?
Chests, bales will come ashore!—cordage and spars,
Hatchets will go to work!—No one will spare,
And why should I?—Not I!—I'll have my share!
[*Takes up the boat-hook, &c.*]

Mari. [*Rushing in.*] Father!

Rob. My child, go in!

Mari. Thou go'st not forth!

Rob. I must!

Mari. O father! 'tis unhallow'd work!

Rob. Go thou to rest!

Mari. And thou at work like that?
How wouldst thou sleep if I were doing wrong?
I will not let thee forth!

Rob. Come from the door!

Mari. Father!—when Heaven commands me shut the door?

Rob. Command who may, I'll open it!—Give way!

[*Forces her from it—she falls.* ROBERT and STEPHEN
go out.]

Mari. Father!—I'm stunn'd! He's gone! How could he
go!

O vice that's early planted!—Hard to weed it!
Plant virtue early!—Give the flower the chance
You suffer to the weed!—To hope success
Where my poor mother fail'd!—Heaven pity him!
Heaven pity him—and I, his child, on earth,
And not attempt to save him!—Father!—Father!—
[*Rushes out.*]

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*The Vicinity of the Shore.*

Enter WOLF and NORRIS, meeting.

Nor. Wolf!

Wolf. Norris!

Nor. For the shore?

Wolf. Yes.

Nor. Whence I've come.

In my o'er-haste, what think you I forgot?
My wrecker's gear! I left them all behind?
My hatchet, boat-hook, grapple, e'en my knife!

[*Going.*]

Wolf. [*Stopping him.*] Tarry a while! Take breath! Your
knife and axe,

Boat-hook and grapple, are not needed yet.

'Tis but the first of flood. Until the tide
Shall lift her o'er the outer bank, she'll hold
Together. Tarry here and look at her!

I have heard of fine sights; ay, and seen them too!

Now what's the finest sight a man can see?

Nor. The finest sight?—a ship that, caught in a bay
Like ours, ten miles and more from any town;

A black sky, a white water, and a shore

All iron-bound, and boiling round with breakers!

No sight like that for me! What tonnage is she?

Wolf. Four hundred and above. I know a ship,
And not so large a one, you had rather were
Aground than she.

Nor. I know the ship you mean:

She left the bay at noon. You're right! I hate

That ship! I hate her for the sake of one

She carries. Were my father in that ship,

I'd laugh to see her drown!—One whom they call

A good young man—only another name

For a limb of the devil! No young man can be good!

We are young, and know we not what we are?—Good!

What should make others better?—Better natures?

There's no such thing!—All mankind are the same;

Circumstance makes the difference. Circumstance

Is not the man! Had I that fair-skinn'd girl,

Old Robert's daughter!—her of the dainty limb,

Round swelling form, and dimpled lady-cheek—

Had I that girl for messmate, or could have,

You'd see how soon I'd grow a good young man,—

Though devil at the bottom, still—as he!

Wolf. You fancy her.—Why not make up to her?

Nor. I told you, now, the sight which most I love.

Wouldst learn the sight which most I hate? Thou shalt.

The show of good, in man or woman,—but,

In woman most.—That's strange!—I hate the sight

Of a modest woman! 'Tis an eyesore to me!

I never look on one, but straight I fall

To gazing on myself! and then I writhe,

At thought of what I am, and what she seems;

Until I seem, unto myself, a beast!—

Yea, a brute beast!—and stand like one before her,

Gazing, and stupid,—dumb!

Wolf. 'Tis strange!

Nor. It is.

I have tried to court her—have accosted her,

But ever, as that lady-cheek of hers

She has turn'd to me, my speech has fail'd me, and

I've stood stock-still, confounded at myself;

And like a chid cur, slunk at last away!

Strange! that the only show of goodness should
So daunt a bold man, that he dares not do
The thing he dares to wish!

Wolf. You mean her fair?

Nor. I do! but e'en for fair ends cannot take
Fair means;—as smiling, speaking pretty things,
Pretty behaviour, creeping inch by inch!
I'd have her at a bound! That's not the way
She would be won. With opportunity
I'd woo her though.

Wolf. What do you mean?

Nor. No matter.

'Tis said they'll marry when this trip is done.
Now would old Robert take a sail, and leave
The girl alone, I'd promise him, that's gone
A merry wedding when his ship comes back.
How goes it on in the bay? She has moved methinks
Since last we look'd.

Wolf. She will not clear the bank
Before high water, or about it.

Nor. And

The storm you see holds on! A lovelier
Never yet broke a stranded vessel up!
And plenty on't! 'Twill last till midnight.—Black
As it can look, and right in the wind's eye!
Ay, steady that!—How slow the tide comes in,
And yet the wind to help it! O'er the bank
And on the rough ground, she'll not hold together
The quarter of an hour! I'll be prepared.
Tell them I'm coming! They'll be sure to give
A wide berth to the reef!

Wolf. I will.

Nor. Make haste!

[*They go out severally.*]

SCENE II.—*The Sea-shore. Thunder, Lightning, and Wind.*

Enter MARIAN.

Mari. I cannot light on him, and not a soul
I pass'd but I have question'd!—Where is he?
My brain will burst!—a horrible oppression
Hangs on my heart, foreboding, sure, of ill!
Like what I felt, that day my mother died!
I hear—I see—
Things that I should not—Forms are flitting by me!
Voices are in mine ears, as if of things
That are—and yet I know are not!—Each step
I fear to tumble o'er the body of
Some drown'd man!—There's one!—A heap of weeds!
O what wild work do fear and fancy make!
Did some one cry?—Well?—What?—Where are you?—No!
'Tis nobody! What is't that still keeps up

This moaning in my ears, as if of words
 Utter'd in agony? 'Tis not the sea!
 'Tis not the wind!—I hear them both. 'Tis not
 The wreckers on the shore!—They utter nought
 But sounds of gladness. 'Tis not the ship!—She's out
 Of hearing. Am I growing mad?—What spot
 Is this I stand upon?—What brought me here?
 'Tis here they say a girl one time went mad,
 Seeing a murder done!—she was in quest
 Of her brother; and she saw a scuffle, and
 Approach'd the struggling men, just as the one
 Did cast the other down. Although 'twas night,
 She saw a knife gleam in the lifted hand
 Of the uppermost! She tried to call—so she said,
 When reason did at last return—but power
 Of utterance was gone. Thrice it descended,
 With a dull, griding sound;—and then, a voice,
 Which stabb'd her heart and brain, exclaim'd—“He's dead!”
 It was her brother's voice. 'Tis strange that fear
 Should be a thing almost as strong as death!
 Should shut the lips up—and deprive the limbs
 Of motion!—Yet have I a feeling how
 The thing may come to pass. The girl alone—
 The men upon the ground—one 'bove the other—
 The knife in his uplifted hand—it falls!
 I feel myself a sense of choking; and
 My feet do seem to cleave unto the ground.
 My tongue doth stiffen!—Ha!—[*Shrieks.*]—I have broke
 the spell!
 I'm by myself!—Another minute,—not
 The girl more mad than I!—They are gone!—All gone!
 The earth, and air, so thick awhile ago,
 With things that neither earth nor air do own,
 Are empty now! Mine ears, and eyes, take note
 Of nothing but what is—the booming sea—
 The yelling wind—the rattling shingles, as
 The waves do roll them up and down again;
 And back my wand'ring thoughts return, to that
 Which brought me 'midst their uproar—to persuade
 My poor, misguided father to return
 And from his lawless work restrain his hands.
 I have traversed all the westward shore in vain,
 I'll search the eastward now.

[*Starts again at the same heap of weeds.*]

Not yet myself!—

'Tis the same heap of weeds I saw before!

[*Goes out.*]

SCENE III.—*Another Part of the Shore.*

Enter ROBERT, *followed by* NORRIS.

Nor. Old Robert!—Hoa!—Stop!—Art afraid of me?

Rob. I never fear'd a man.

Nor. Why shun me then ?

Rob. I like thee not.

Nor. "Two of a trade!" Is't so ?

Well! I'm the luckiest wrecker of you all.

I cannot help it! Fortune bear the blame!

That has her favourites, as all men know

She has long made one of me! Is it right to hate

A man for his good luck ?

Rob. It isn't that.

Nor. It isn't that!—What else?—What can you say

Against me else? A splinter'd spar the waves

Do throw to you—a lockfast chest to me!

To me the breakers slue the captain in;

Mate—passenger from the Indies, West or East.

A foremast man to you—you know 'tis so,

And like the rest, do bear me envy; most

Unlike a man! But fortune ever turns

The evil you do wish me, into good.

I have no partner in my gains—what comes

To hand is all my own! "Afraid of me!"

I said it but in sport. I know you're not

Afraid of me, or any other man,

Or anything!—Have I not seen you leap

Into a boiling sea, to save a wretch

When his boat foundered! 'Twas a feat I doubt

If any other of the craft would do!

Wilt go, or tarry? Nay, there's time enough;

She holds together yet. There's lots of time.

What speed didst come when drove the last on shore?

Rob. Some coils of cordage; and a spar or two.

Nor. What then did fortune, think you, throw to me?

Rob. I cannot tell.

Nor. One hundred guineas, all

But one, lapp'd here and there, in various coin,

In the heavy vest and trowsers of a man—

I mean, a body—that was wash'd ashore.

Here's one of them.

Rob. A broad doubloon.

Nor. How much

Brought you your spars and cordage? How I laugh'd

To see you, heavy laden, toiling home

With a few crowns' worth, and I going light

With a good hundred guineas, all but one!

And you don't like me!—Why?—I'm a rough man;

And low'ring as they say!—but has all fruit

A fair outside? How ill-favour'd a one

A walnut has—a chestnut—cocoa-nut!

And yet how sweet within!—Yea there is milk

Within the cocoa-nut!—You never know

Some men by their outsides!—Prove them, and then

You'll know them. Here's another piece more broad,

And heavy than the first. Know you the coin?

Rob. No!—it is strange to me.

Nor. Examine it.

There's something now that I would be about ;
Yet know not what it is !—Ne'er heed ! The devil
Will prompt me when 'tis time !

[*Aside.*

Rob. I cannot tell
The coin.

Nor. Here ; take a look at this.

Rob. Another !

Nor. Ay !—Will you believe me now ?

Rob. Black Norris, you're

A lucky man !

Nor. "Black Norris !" Well !—it is
My nick-name. You may give it me—more black
May go by fairer name !

Rob. I meant no harm.

Nor. I know you didn't !—There's none ! I tell you what—
There's not a man of all the crew, but one,
I do not hate. The best were first to peach,
When my old father, seven long years ago,
Did something which he could not do by law ;
And was transported, for the lack of learning.
He didn't know 'twas wrong !—Well, as I said,
I hate them all, but one ! and which is he ?—
Yourself—I say no more !—Believe it, or
Believe it not !

Rob. Nay, rather I'd believe it.
I never thought before, you were so frank.

Nor. How could you think ?—Grew samphire on yon cliff,
Who'd know't, if no one went to seek it there ?
You keep aloof, and—strange !—you know me not !
You, none of you, consort with me, except
Young Wolf, another hang-dog, as they say.
He's a wrong'd man, and so am I—we are friends ;
For common wrongs make friends of those that share them.

Rob. 'Tis natural.

Nor. 'Tis right !—as common fortunes,
So likewise doth a common vein, make friends,
My greatest enemy allows me brave !
I cared for thee no more than I did care
For any other of the churlish set ;
But, when I saw thee venture thy own life,
With ten to one against thee, for that man,
I took a liking to thee !—That, you may
Believe, or not, as well as the other.

Rob. Nay,
But I believe it.

Nor. You can do no good
To me !—I have nothing to get by you !

Rob. Nothing !

Nor. Have I not ? What a silly adage that
About old birds and chaff !

[*Aside.*

Rob. Here—here's thy gold.

Nor. Nay, keep it, an thou wilt.

Rob. Not so, good Norris.

Nor. A rare bird I, to turn from black to white! [*Aside.*
Why, I believe you're right; 'Tis doubtful gain,
To keep a thing that's not one's own! The ship
Is now on the rough ground!—How fair she lies!—
Her broadside to the sea, that not a wave
But tells upon her!—What a cloud of surf
Keeps flying over her!—Look!—There's a sea!
'Twill take her right a-midships—Hurra!—Hurra!—
She has parted in the waist!—Old Robert, where
The use of words, when man can talk by deeds!
Yon reef you know is mine—they call it mine,
Because I make it mine—So far it runs
Into the bay, it makes a kind of eddy,
Whose swirl doth sweep all kinds of lumber in
That come within its reach—as prove my gains;
'Tis thine to-day! Go try thy luck upon it.
I'll help thee, if thou need'st—but not to touch
A stiver, though ten bodies should float in,
With pockets cramm'd with gold. There's something! haste!
The waves do snatch as readily as give.
The tide is on the turn—the shore doth shelve
A foot in every nine!

Rob. I thank thee, Norris.

Nor. Off to the reef—Have cause, and thank me then!

[*ROBERT goes out hastily.*

It is a body that is wash'd ashore!
I'd know it at twice the distance. A fine torch
The lightning! Rain will never put it out!
A body!—I begin to see it now.
Yes, it is done!

Wolf. [*Entering.*] Well, Norris!

Nor. All is well.

Run to the nearest group of wreckers,—say
You saw old Robert stooping o'er a body—
That you suspect foul play—and bring them to
The reef. He's there—but hold—not quite so fast;
Let me have time to join him.—Go!—don't say
That I am there. Now, pretty Marian, [*WOLF goes out.*
Sure as thy lover is this hour at sea,
Thy father takes a trip, and follows him.
Bide there my tackle! I had best go bare!

[*Puts his boat-hook, &c., behind a rock, and goes out.*

SCENE IV. *The Shore close to the Sea.*

Enter ROBERT, dragging in a body.—*MARIAN in the distance, slowly coming down a path cut out of the cliff*—*NORRIS behind a rock, from which he looks, occasionally.*

Rob. The surge won't reach thee there! I warrant me
No fear thou'lt go to it. Thy last—last draught,

In this world, hath it given thee—a cold,
Unwelcome one! Safe bide thou there! The waves
Are in a giving mood! I'd be at hand
To profit by their bounty. I did think
Some one was near me! Fancy!—How it lightens! [*Goes out.*]

Enter MARIAN.

Mari. The storm distracts me with its din! This roar,
This never-ending roar, which round and round,
The heavens keep up!—in which the surges join,
As though the thunder were not loud enough!
No sign, yet, of my father! What with fears
For him, and terror of the tempest, I'm
Bewilder'd! Let me try and look, above,
Beyond the clouds—beyond the stars! No storm
Is there! no wreck!—no raging sea!—no thunder!
But calm, and warmth, and brightness, as befits
The dwellings of the blest!—My mother's there!
O, my poor father! Here's the storm again!
Sea, thunder, lightning—all come back again!

Re-enter ROBERT.

Rob. I have lost my knife! Methinks I dropp'd it here!

[*Sees MARIAN.*]

What's that!—Is it a mortal thing? It makes
My spirit faint within me!—'Tis the form
Of my lost Marian!—Even so she stood
In the storm wherein her life was cast away!
Can she not lie in her grave for me?—Do my sins
Break on her last rest, there, and call her thence?
I sent her thither—on such nights as this
I have often look'd about me with a thought
That she was near me. There at last she is!
It is my Marian risen from her grave!
She comes to me!—O powers of grace, preserve me! [*Kneels.*]
Mari. The strength of Heaven!—To see it, yet not feel it!
Within its reach to do what it forbids!
And it in anger!—see the weapons of
Its wrath in motion—feel the earth shake at them!
And never pay it awe!—stand up to it!
Defy it!—stead of falling on one's knees,
And asking it for mercy.

Rob. Mercy.

Mari. Ha!

My father!

Rob. Marian!

Mari. On thy knees!—That's right—
Fear not! Thou dost Heaven's bidding!—Do not rise
Until thou risest with its blessed pardon!

Rob. [*Rising.*] What brought thee here, my child? Thou
ne'er before
Cam'st after me.

Mari. I came to look for thee ;
 And to persuade thee to come home with me.
 Thou tremblest—Thou art pale—as livid as
 The lightning ! Dost thou hear ? 'Tis everywhere !
 Not the clouds only, but the very air—
 The very sea—the very earth—do thunder !
 All—all is din and fire ! It is right
 For man to tremble !

Rob. 'Tis not that !

Mari. What then ?

Rob. I took thee for thy mother, Marian !

Mari. Think me her still, and what she'd have thee do,
 Do, by the love thou bearest to her, still !
 Forswear this lawless life !—Thou wouldst not rob
 A living man !—'Tis manlier to strip
 The living, than the dead !

Rob. This night's the last !

Mari. This night !—O, no !—The last night be the last !
 Who makes his mind up that a thing is wrong,
 Yet says he'll do that thing for the last time,
 Commences but anew a course of sin,
 Of which that last sin is the leading one,
 Which many another, and a worse, will follow !
 At once begin ! How many, at this hour,
 Alive as thou art, will not live to see
 To-morrow's light !—If thou shouldst be cut off !
 Should thy last sin be done, on thy last night !
 Should Heaven avenge itself on that last sin
 Thou dost repentingly !—my father, come !—
 O ! a bad conscience, and a sudden death !
 Come home !—Come home !—Come home !

Rob. I'll follow thee.

I'll fetch my boat-hook, and my other gear,
 And follow thee.

Mari. I'll loiter till you come.

I'll rest upon yon rock, and wait for thee ;
 For what with cares for thee, and terror of
 The storm, I'm almost sped !

Enter NORRIS, cautiously.

Nor. Now is the time !—Now ! while her back's to me.
 Is he dead ? There's warmth, methinks, about the heart,
 More than there should be ! 'Tis no matter !—Cowards
 May stick at trifles !—Can I find a stone
 To knock him on the head ?—What's this ?—A knife !
 'Tis Robert's !

Mari. [*Re-appearing and ascending the cliff.*] What's that
 you are doing, father ?

Nor. She takes me for her father !—Good ! She'll see
 What I do, and think it is her father does it,
 And when 'tis done, so will I slink away,

She can't discover her mistake!—Now for it!

[He plunges the knife into the body—MARIAN utters a faint shriek, and falls senseless.]

She saw it! Marian's in my power! She's mine!

What next?—Quick work, and sure!—When he returns,

His daughter out of sight, he'll search the corpse;

Discover'd in the act, the nail is clinch'd!

But other witnesses are needed.—I

Were better out of sight. Wolf is at hand,

Nor yet alone. I'll speed to him and give him

His cue, and he and they will soon be here.

[Goes out.]

Rob. [Re-entering.] To leave it there!

And the last time! Where's Marian?—Out of sight!

The pockets may be full!—Why did I quit them

Unsearch'd, in greediness for other prey?—

Not now too late! I'm all alone!—A minute

Will serve to rifle them! I were a fool

To leave to others, what of right is mine!

[Goes to the body, and empties one pocket.]

What have we here? Some of the bright broad pieces

Black Norris show'd me! What a madness 'twere

To leave them in the pockets of the dead,

And let the living go with empty ones!

I'll count them by-and-by!—And this is full!

[Empties the other pocket.]

I'll ease it of its burthen!—Gold! All gold!

Whence comes that glare? Ha!—'Tis the beacon struck

By the lightning, and on fire!

Enter suddenly WOLF, AMBROSE, and others; led by NORRIS.

Amb. What do you there,
Old Robert?

Rob. Nothing that I fear to do.

Amb. What hold you in your hand?

Rob. Gold!

Amb. Gold?

Rob. Ay, gold!

Wolf. Let's look at the body!—Ha!—What's here—A knife?

Rob. My knife!

Amb. Your knife? Why, Robert, it is sticking
In the dead man's breast!

Wolf. Pull out the knife!

Amb. 'Tis Robert's knife!—How came this, Robert?
See;—he cannot speak!

Phil. [Descending the cliff.] What's here?—A woman!—Is she dead?
[Lifts MARIAN.]

'Tis Marian!

She breathes! She's stunn'd; that's all! 'Tis well the ledge
Preserved her from the bottom! She must needs
Have miss'd her footing.

Wolf. Swoon'd, as likely, at
The sight of what her father did.

[*MARIAN, recovering consciousness, descends, supported by PHILIP, who brings her towards her father.*]

Rob. [*Restored to collectedness at sight of his daughter.*] My
Marian!

Wolf. You see she swoons again.
The sight of him recalls the deed of blood!

Rob. My Marian!

Wolf. Hold him fast!
Help Norris, while he takes him to his hut;
I'll help you too!

Rob. My Marian!

Wolf. She swoons
Away again.

Rob. Let me go, friends!—I'm innocent! For the love
Of Heaven, don't drag me from my child! I'm innocent!

Marian! My Marian! My Marian!

I'm an old man, lads! Use me gently! No!

Don't drag me from my child!—I'm innocent!

My Marian! My Marian! My Marian!

[*They force ROBERT away, leaving MARIAN supported by PHILIP.*]

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The inside of a Hut.*

ROBERT discovered pacing to and fro.

Rob. A murderer!—What—I, that sicken at
The sight of blood, to do the deed of blood!

A murderer!—and with a hand as free

From blood as an infant's!—To be tried for it!

Condemn'd, perhaps, and executed!—I!—

That never did it!—Then my branded name,

That don't deserve the brand—and, worse than all,

To leave it to my child—my Marian!

My fair young girl!—good!—good!—whom Heaven sent

To save her father; but he would not heed her—

Turn'd a deaf ear unto an angel's lips,

To listen to that devil, the greed of pelf!

That was my crime, indeed—but only that.

Some one has circumvented me, but who?

Black Norris? Him or Wolf I sore suspect—

But what's suspicion only?—Not a thread

To bind a man with!

Enter NORRIS.

Nor. Robert!

Rob. Is it you,
Black Norris?

Nor. Yes, 'tis I—Black Norris, as
You call me—come to cheer you.

Rob. Well, Black Norris?

Nor. I don't believe you did that murder.

Rob. No?

Nor. Some one has got the better of you—laid
A trap for you, and caught you—who—Heaven knows!
I say, I don't believe you guilty, but
Appearances are all against you—caught
Stripping the body, with the gold in your hand,
And your knife sticking in the dead man's breast!—

Rob. Who stuck it there?

Nor. Why, how should I tell?

Rob. [*Catching hold of* NORRIS.] Nay,
Who stuck it there?

Nor. Not I,

Nor any one I know!—Take off thy hands,
Old man!—I did not come to wrestle with thee;
Wish'd I a game like that, I'd tackle to
With tougher sinews!—For another end
I came—to tell thee 'tis my turn to watch,
And hast thou goods to run, the coast is clear—
Now, grip me by the throat.

Rob. Forgive me, Norris.

Nor. Forgive thee!—Fiddlesticks!—Offend me first,
Then ask me to forgive thee. Here is gold
For that they took away from thee.—Away!
Make straight for the east coast!—Take shipping there,
And where thou settlest, advertise me!—Go!—

Rob. [*Going, stops short.*] My child! I had forgot her—Seek
her! Seek

And bring her to me! I can't fly from death
Without my child!—I can't forsake my child!

Nor. Forsake thy child!—A stranger, now, to her
Availeth more than thou. What are the dead
Unto the living?—Nothing!—Not the worth
Of a wheaten straw.—That helps to make a light!
You can make nothing of the dead!—If you thirst—
Hunger—go naked—suffer anything;
You may for them! There's help in a live mouse
More than a dead man!—and what else art thou?
Accused of that, the man that doeth which
The law condemns to die. Escape the law—
And then talk of thy Marian.

Rob. No more;
Thou madden'st me!

Nor. I tell thee what thou know'st

Must be!—And, sooth to say, though a rough man,
 I've no desire to see thee die the death!
 Who meets it bravest, but puts on a mask
 Which only proves the agony 'twould hide,
 When at the hangman's touch, the sweat-drop starts
 On the bold brow, so seeming calm; and the blood
 Flies to the heart, and leaves the valiant cheek,
 That would be thought to smile, without a drop
 To vouch for it!

Rob. Thou harrow'st me, good Norris.

Nor. Yet what I tell, thou know'st! What must it be,
 When a reprieve, at the last point, has kill'd!
 I knew a man who narrowly escaped.
 To think of what he told me, even now
 Makes me breathe thick, and from my crown to my sole
 Sets my flesh tingling; and all o'er my skin
 Spreads the chill, clammy, heavy dew of death!—
 What at the sight of the huge, living mass
 Of human faces, all upturn'd, he felt
 As would a living man, suppose he lay
 Beside a corpse—for such, he said, he seem'd
 To be unto himself. How he began to freeze,
 To freeze at the heat of the sun, with thought of the grave!

How life

Stared on him, yea, from lifeless things around him!
 Fields, houses, walls, stones—yea, the grisly frame
 He stood on, his last footing-place in the world!
 And he living a spectacle of death!

The process then—

Rob. Leave off!—I choke!—I fly!—
 The door is fast!

Nor. Thy fear hath shot the bolt!—
 You see 'tis open!

Rob. [*Taking his handkerchief from his neck.*] Give my
 Marian this,
 And be a friend to her!

Nor. I will.

Rob. My child!

Nor. Soon as the seas are cross'd, what hinders her
 Take ship, and follow thee?

Rob. Thou'lt see to that?

Nor. I will.

Rob. My blessing on thee, Norris!

Nor. Nay!—

Rob. Thou'rt the preserver of my life—and all
 That makes it life to me! As thou to me
 Art kind, may Heaven prove kind to thee! Thy face
 Why dost thou turn away?

Nor. I do not like
 That any see me weep!—I had as lief
 Be hang'd as thank'd! My watch is nearly spent,
 A quarter of an hour; and 'tis the span

In which thy coil of life doth lie. Make haste!
 Why dost thou stand bewild'ed thus? Look, Robert!
 There is the door!—A minute more 'tis lock'd!
 Choose on which side on't thou wilt then be found.

Rob. I take thy proffer—Norris!

Nor. If thou breathest
 Another word of thanks!—

Rob. I won't!—You'll not
 Forget my child?—You'll be a father to her?
 Swear thou wilt be a father to my child!

Nor. You note my hand is on the key!

Rob. Don't turn it!
 I am gone!—I fly!—My Marian!—My Marian! [*Rushes out.*]

Nor. My Marian!—An open window. Ay!

Now a fast door. Who's there?

Wolf [*outside*]. 'Tis I.

Nor. What, Wolf?

Enter WOLF.

Come in! He's off!—he's fled!—Art sorry, man?
 I'm not much prone to pity; yet had as lief
 A man that's innocent should escape as die.

Wolf. That's innocent!

Nor. Thou fool! Hast known me still
 Thy master in all kinds of craftiness,
 Could buy and sell thee, and believest thou yet
 He murder'd him?

Wolf. Who did it then?

Nor. By my troth,
 Thou hast no stomach for a deed of blood!
 Thy own seems spill'd at only thought of one!
 'Sdeath! Is't a frost, man, that thy cheek's so white,
 And that thou shiver'st so? "Who did it then?"
 No one! There's fire to warm thee! Be thyself!

Wolf. The knife was taken from his breast.

Nor. It was!—

What ails thy teeth to make them chatter so?
 Want'st meat, or drink, or sleep, or what? "The knife
 Was taken from his breast!" What then? The knife
 Found nothing there it could not find within
 A six weeks' buried corpse! Furies and death!
 Believeest me not?—or takest me for a ghost,
 Still gazing on me thus, with mouth agape?
 Listen! Whilst he was gone to fetch his gear,
 Which he had left behind him on the reef,
 Soon as it served to draw the body in,
 I, who was all along upon the watch,
 Stole to the body, thereupon to leave
 Some mark of violence,—such as prates of hands,
 Found the wreck'd seaman, dead. [*WOLF shakes his head.*] I
 tell thee, dead!

'Sdeath ! won't believe me still ? Searching for something
 To serve my purpose—lo ! my hand by chance
 Lit on his knife, he had dropp'd—on Robert's knife !—
 When didst thou get the ague ? What a fit !—
 I say by chance I lit on Robert's knife,
 For which this hand of mine—not Robert's, as
 Thou thought'st—Thou dog-fish ! How I laugh at thee !—
 Gave it the sheath wherein thou saw'st it sticking.
 Why, thou wilt shake thee out of joint ! What heeds
 A dead man's breast a knife, more than a pincushion
 A pin !

Wolf. [*Stammering.*] The body !

Nor. What of it ?

Is it tied to thee ? Art in the death-grip of
 The drownéd man ? I would not think thee, Wolf,
 A chicken heart, yet never saw I man
 That look'd more like a coward ! Couldst thou see
 Thyself and look at me ! What of the body ?
 Did it rise up, and walk, or run, or caper,
 Or offer thee a hand to shake, or talk,
 Or troll a song to thee ? What did the body
 To make thee marvel like a man demented ?
 Tell me, that I may play the madman too !

Wolf. Pray Heaven thou go'st not mad in earnest !

Nor. Man !

Wolf !—Have a care !—Don't take me for a child,
 Because thyself art one ! Thou wouldst not say
 That life was in the body ?—It was warm
 About the heart ! [*Aside.*]—Sit down, good Wolf, sit down ;
 Recover thee a little. Tell thy tale
 Thy own way. For I see there's something—come—
 Go on—the body ?

Wolf. I return'd to it

When thou and all the rest were gone, to search
 If yet a coin or two remain'd. 'Twas bleeding !
 I thought it strange, for not a drop I saw,
 Follow'd, when out the knife I drew ; and I fancied
 Life must be in it still—and so it was !
 I felt the heart beat slow and dull—mine own
 Methought would stop !

Nor. Kept the blood flowing still ?

Wolf. It did—more free ; and as it flow'd, the heart
 Began more free to beat.

Nor. It had been wrong
 To stop the blood.

Wolf. I didn't !—I only watch'd
 The heart, the beat of which grew stronger still,
 Until methought the chest began to heave ;
 And so it did !—and, presently, I heard
 A gurgling in the throat of the shipwreck'd man,
 And I began to freeze, expecting now
 To hear the body speak.

Nor. Did it ?

Wolf. Almost !

A sound between a murmur and a moan.

Nor. Was it repeated ?

Wolf. Yes ; but very faint.

Nor. Any more ?

Wolf. Yes ; fainter though, at every time ;
And now the heart beat faint, and presently
Came a slight shivering o'er the body—then
A sigh—and nothing more—the soul had fled !

Nor. I thought 'twas over warm about the heart !

Wolf. O Norris, say it not !

Nor. What did I say ?

Wolf. You thought 'twas over warm about the heart.

Nor. Well !—Of what value is a spark of life,
More than a spark of any other thing ?

Wolf. The body was thy father's !

Nor. Devil !—Imp

Of Hell ! Unsay it, or thou diest, with
A lie in thy throat !

Wolf. Were it my last breath, Norris,
I speak the truth !

Nor. Who else has heard it from thee ?

Wolf. No one !

Nor. I am mad !—No wonder if I am !

Wretch, hadst thou stopp'd the old man's blood—

Wolf. He had lived !

I thought thy interest 'twas, that he should die.
I knew not then it was thy father.

Nor. Devil !

Why had I anything to say to thee !

And where's the body now ?

Wolf. I left it where
I found it.

Nor. Fool !—Thou shouldst have carried it
To the cliff, and cast it straight into the sea,
Where ne'er the sand is dry.

Wolf. Would not the sea
Have thrown it up again ?

Nor. The sea ?—The earth,
Though it were buried in't ten fathom deep,
Would throw it up again !—Nothing can make
A grave that's deep enough to keep it !—Cast
A mountain on't, 'twould heave it off !—They'll know it
When it is brought before the coroner !

Wolf. I have taken care of that.

Nor. Mangled the features ?

Wolf. Yes !

Nor. Savage !—

Wolf. For thy sake I did it !

Nor. True !

Right !—You did very right—and after all

What was it but a piece of clay?—Now, Wolf,
Where wouldst thou be?

Wolf. Why, anywhere but here!

Nor. Wilt cross the sea?—Thou hadst a hand, thou knowest,
In the murder—Thou didst finish it—Thou lett'st
The old man die—he were not murder'd, else—
Wilt cross the sea?—I'll give thee gold enough
To pay thy passage wheresoe'er thou'lt go,
And set thee down there, as a man,—and more,
If more thou want'st—Wilt cross the sea?

Wolf. I will.

Nor. When wilt thou start?—To-morrow?

Wolf. Yes.

Nor. At dawn?

Wolf. At dawn!—

Nor. That's good!—That's excellent!—I'm much
Beholden to thee, Wolf—Thou'rt a true friend—
Go far—Go very far!—The wider berth
The better! Stop not at a thousand miles—
Or two—or three!—Look, Wolf! I have a jar
Buried in the garden, full of treasure—Take it,
And luck go with you!—You will start to-morrow?
At dawn?—Take passage to a distant land,
Will you not!—Thank you! Thank you, Wolf! I'll ne'er
Forget you!—never cease to be your friend! [*They go out.*]

SCENE II.—*The inside of Robert's Cottage.*

Enter MARIAN.

Mari. My father's house! O would it were, indeed,
My father's house, as I knew it!—once!
I were content to be a wrecker's child!
But now I have a feeling as I were
The loathing of the roof that gave me birth!
The threshold, which from childhood, out and in
I have pass'd—and O how oft in blithest mood!—
Seem'd as it said to me I had no right
To cross it now—my room would shut me out!
The very bed I've slept in every night
For eighteen years, appear'd to say to me,
“Lie on the floor!”—and when in agony
I threw myself upon the floor, I shrank,
As that would spurn me too, and cry to me,
“Thou art the daughter of a murderer!”—
Me, that when household use required the life
Of a poor brainless bird, would run a mile
To get some other hand to take it, nor
Could even then look on!—But where is nature?
She has been scared away, but now returns.
O my poor father!—O my luckless father!

My hapless, guilty father!—Will the day
Never more break?—I only wait for it
To seek for him, and comfort him, and tell him
That I am still his child—his Marian!

Rob. [*Rushing in.*] My Marian!—What! Hold'st thou back
from me?

Mari. No.

Rob. But thou dost!

Mari. No!—No!—See there—I have thrown
My arms around thy neck!

Rob. Yes!—but you turn
Your head away!

Mari. Is't turn'd away now?

Rob. No!
But where's the kiss, you never met me but
You printed on my cheek?—

Mari. There!

Rob. Humph!—I fear
I have thrown away both time and risk—I came
To seek my daughter—but she is not here!—
She has gone from me!—deserted me!—I have lost her!

Mari. No!—No!—

Rob. You know her?—fetch me her!—make haste!

Mari. She's here!

Rob. She's not!—She's anywhere but here!
And I am here at peril of my life,
To see her for a minute ere I go
Perhaps for ever from her.

Mari. Oh! my father!
I am indeed thy child!—Thy Marian!

Rob. These tears are something like her—I begin
To think that thou'rt my child—Thou art my child!
Thou hast heard it?

Mari. Yes!

Rob. What ponderous thing is "Yes,"
To take a sigh like that to heave it off?

Mari. Thou art in danger.

Rob. Great!—To-morrow, may be,
A dungeon! there, most certainly the dock!—
There, in all likelihood, the gibbet! but
I have a chance—that chance is now!—'Tis little!
And, every moment that I lose, grows less!
But I'm content it should go all!—ay, all!
If I have lost one fraction of my child
That's due to me—go all—and let it go!

Mari. I am all thy own—Thy own hand not thy own
More than thy Marian!—Thou'rt in flight!—We'll fly
Together!

Rob. [*Re-assured.*] No, but thou shalt follow me,
And speedily!—Think kindly of Black Norris!—
He set me free—He'll be a friend to thee—
He furnish'd me with means of flight.

Mari. With means ?

[*MARIAN goes out, and returns with a little purse.*
Here, father, here !

Rob. Part of thy little store ?

Mari. The rest 's at sea. To have it with me, now,
Though it might grow to millions where 'tis gone,
I'd miss the mighty gain !

Rob. And thou, my child ?—

Mari. I have hands !—There's Heaven !—O father !

Rob. Dost thou think
Thy father guilty ?

Mari. I think nothing, now ;
Except that thou'rt in danger.

Rob. Marian,
I no more did the deed—

Mari. They will be here,
And then thou art lost !

Rob. Thou dost not think me guilty ?

Mari. What matter what thy Marian thinks, when death
Pursues thee and thou lingerest here, and not
One moment am I certain but the next
It may o'ertake thee—here !—in thy own house !
That's now no shelter for thee—here !—before
Thy Marian's eyes, that cannot help thee !—Fly !
Thy life perhaps may pay for the next breath
Thou drawest here !—The thought distracts me !—Fly !

Rob. It cannot be thou think'st me guilty ?

Mari. Fly !
Terror will take away my senses—Fly !

Rob. I do begin to doubt thou think'st me guilty ?

Mari. O father, fly !

Rob. I am innocent !

Mari. 'Tis well !

Rob. It is not well—I am innocent ! I'll swear it !

Mari. Thou need'st not, father—Don't !—Fly !—Fly !—

Rob. By— [Raising his hand towards heaven.

Mari. Stop ! [Preventing him.

Rob. Thou think'st me guilty !—Spare thy kindness—There,
Perish thy coin ! I will not use it !—fly !

Do anything to save my life !—If it goes,
It may go !—Here I'll sit !—E'en here !—Ay here !—

Here in the cottage thou wast born in, nursed,
Brought up in—till thou'rt eighteen years, and now
Tell'st thine own father he's a murderer !

Here I'll wait for them—Let them come and take me !
Take me before thine eyes !—imprison me !

Try me, and hang me ! I'll not turn my hand
To save my life ! Since my own child, that knows me,
Believes me guilty. I am guilty !—Yes !

Let all the world beside believe me so.

Amb. [without]. What ho !

Rob. They come !

Mari. Fly by the other door! [Knocking at that door.

Rob. You hear? It is beset!

Mari. Hide somewhere!

Rob. Where?

They'll search the house!—Were there a hundred doors

And all were free—were there a cavern, where

No foot could follow me—I would sit here

And let them take me!

Amb. Robert!

Rob. [Opens the door.] Here!—Come in!

[AMBROSE and others enter.

Mari. For mercy's sake!—

Rob. For no sake!—Here I am:

Take me!

Mari. My father!

Rob. I am guilty!

Mari. Nay!—

Rob. She says I am—take me away!

Mari. O! stay!

Don't take him yet!—Good friends!—You are neighbours!—

Don't!

Don't take away my father!—Leave him with me!—

Pray—Pray don't take him!

Rob. I am guilty—Take me!

I am guilty!—Ask my child—my Marian!

Mari. Don't!—Don't!—Stay! Mercy! Mercy!—O my father!

[They go out.

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—A Waiting-room.

Enter AMBROSE and PHILIP.

Amb. He is committed, and I pity him!

To be condemn'd upon the evidence

Of his own daughter! 'Tis unnatural

To take away the life that gave us ours!

This comes of learning!—Had it been a child

Of yours, or mine, what heed would she have taken

Of a false oath, to save her father's life?

Her mother was a sort of lady—ay,

The daughter of a broken gentleman,

Took up his quarters in the cottage, while

Old Robert's father lived. They fell in love,

And at the father's death, they married.

Phil. So

Fair Marian's lady breeding.

Amb. Even so
 She, as her mother used before, it seems,
 Still quarrels with the freedom that we take
 With dead men's gear; and to the beach must needs
 Follow her father—She had better far
 Have sought her death, for what a curse must life
 Be to her now! Was it not strange she fainted
 Soon as her evidence was done, and yet
 Could give that evidence!

Phil. Here comes old Robert.

Enter ROBERT between two constables, followed by men and women.—NORRIS in the back-ground.

Rob. I am innocent! I am murder'd! My own child
 Has sworn my life away! My Marian!
 Falsely—most falsely!—When they try me, 'tis
 By her I die; not by the judge—the jury,
 Or any one but her! She gives the verdict!—
 Passes the sentence!—puts my limbs in irons!—
 Casts me into my dungeon!—drags me thence
 To the scaffold!—is my executioner!
 Does all that puts her father in his grave
 Before his time!—Her father, good to her,
 Whate'er he was to others—Oh! to have died
 By any evidence but mine own child's!
 Take me to prison.

First Constable. We are waiting for
 The order of committal.

Mari. [*Rushing in.*] O my father!

Rob. Thy father?—Am I so?—I prithee, girl,
 Call me that name again! It is a thing
 Too strange to be believed!

Mari. What, father?

Rob. What?

Why, to be father to so good a child!

Mari. So good a child?

Rob. So good a child! I say it
 Again!—So good a child!—Come, look at me!
 Give me thy hand!—the other one, and look
 Full in my face!—And fix thine eyes on mine!—
 As I do live, thou canst!—And yet canst lie
 To call me father!—Thou'rt no child of mine!

[*Casts her from him, she falls on her knees.*]

Mari. My father!

Rob. Up! or I will trample on thee!
 Fasten my hands in thy dark silken hair,
 And lift thee up by it, and fling thee from me!
 Who gave thee those fine locks?

Mari. Thou! Thou!

Rob. Who gave thee
 Those hands thou clasp'st to me?

Mari. Thou!

Rob. I!—Indeed!

And the rest of thy limbs?—Thy body? and the tongue—
That murder'd me—Owest everything to me?

Mari. I do!—indeed I do!

Rob. Indeed! Indeed!

Thou liest! Thou wast never child of mine!
No!—No!—I never carried thee up and down
The beach in my arms, many and many a day,
To strengthen thee, when thou wast sickly!—No!
I never brought thee from the market-town,
Whene'er I went to it, a pocket-load
Of children's gear!—No!—No!—I never was
Your playfellow that ne'er fell out with you,
Whate'er you did to him!—No!—Never! Nor
When fever came into the village, and
Fix'd its fell gripe on you, I never watch'd
Ten days and nights running, beside your bed,
Living, I know not how, for sleep I took not,
And hardly food! And since your mother died—

Mari. Thou'lt kill me, father!

Rob. Since your mother died,

I have not been a mother and a father

Both—both to thee!

Mari. Oh! spare me!

Rob. I was never

Anything to thee!—Call me father!—why
A father's life is wrapp'd up in his child!
Was mine wrapp'd up in thee?—Thou know'st 'twas not!—
How durst thou call me father?—fasten upon me!—
That never gave thee proof, sign, anything
Of recognition that thou wast my child!
Strain'd thee to my heart by the hour!—parting thy hair
And smoothing it, and calling thee all things
That fondness, idolizing, thinks upon
To speak its yearning love!—core of my heart!
I never was a father to thee, so
Don't call me father! Thou'rt no child of mine!

Mari. I am!—I am!—Don't say I'm not thy child!

The child to whom thou didst all this and more.

Rob. Thou stood'st not then, just now, in the witness-box,
Before the justice in that justice-room,
And swore'st my life away.

Mari. Where thou dost say,

I stood!—What thou dost say, I did!—and yet,
Not in those hours thou name'st of fond endearment,
Felt, as I felt it then, thou wast my father!

Rob. Well!—Justify it—Prove thee in the right—
Make it a lawful thing—a natural thing—

The act of a child!—a good child—a true child!

An only one!—one parent in the grave,
The other left—that other, a fond father—
A fond, old, doating, idolizing father!

Approve it such an act, in such a child,
To slay that father! Come!

Mari. An oath!—an oath!

Rob. Thy father's life!

Mari. Thy daughter's soul!

Rob. 'Twere well

Thy lips had then a little of the thing

The heart had over much of!

Mari. What?

Rob. Stone!—Rock!

They never should have open'd!

Mari. Silence had

Condemn'd thee equally.

Rob. But not the breath

Mine own life gave!

Mari. I felt in the justice-room

As if the final judgment-day were come,

And not a hiding-place my heart could find

To screen a thought or wish; but every one

Stood naked 'fore the judge, as, now, my face

Stands before you! I could not, in his presence,

Deny the thing he knew—the thing he knew,

Was also known to me! I could not take,

And in his face, his holy name in vain!

Nor could I hold my peace; a stronger will

Than mine, than yours, than all the world's, compell'd

My lips to open!—I lost thought, that moment,

Of everything—friends, lover, father, all!—

I nothing saw but that all-seeing eye

Bent searchingly on mine—though now I see

Nothing but my father!

[She rushes towards him, and throws her arms round his neck.]

Rob. Hold off!—thou adder!

Sting me, and think to coil about me still

With thy loathsome folds! Think I will suffer thee!

Not grasp thee!—pluck thee from me!—dash thee to

The earth!

Mari. Oh! no!

Rob. Unloose thy coil!—my flesh

Creeps at the touch of thee! Let go thy hold,

Or I will do some violence to thee!

Mari. Do!

Rob. Strike thee!

Mari. Do!—Dead!—Dead!—'Twere merciful.

Rob. No: suffer thee to live, that thou mayst see
My execution.

Mari. Is it thy child

Thou speakest to!

Rob. Let go, or I will curse thee!

Mari. Do! so thou sufferest me to cling to thee.
You cannot think I swore it with my will!

That I—thy child—thy Marian—all my life
 Good to thee—was I not?—and loving thee!—
 Did I not?—O you cannot think that I,
 Who would suffer torture—death—ten thousand deaths,
 To save thy life—would swear thy life away
 Willingly? willingly?—Oh! in my heavy strait—
 To be an instrument of justice 'gainst thee—
 That makes me wish—and I *do* wish it—thou
 Hadst never given me being!—bear not thus
 Unsufferably hard upon thy child!—
 Thy child as ever! Whatsoe'er she did!
 Whatsoever thou hast done!—That loves thee—dotes
 Upon thee! honours!—idolizes thee,
 As e'er did child her father!

Rob. Let me go!
 Or sure as I'm a living murder'd man—
 Murder'd by thee;—I'll curse thee!—let me go!—

Third Bailiff enters with a paper, which he gives to the First Bailiff.

Third Bailiff. The order of committal!

Mari. [*To Bailiff.*] Stop!—a minute!

Rob. Or loose thy hold, or bide my curse!

Mari. My mother!

That is in her grave—who gave me to thee—gave me,
 When she had bless'd me on her death-bed, saying,
 "Be mother, now, and father to our child!"—
 For her sake, father! Am I not by her
 Enough an orphan!—would I, think you, would I
 Be more an orphan than I am?

Rob. Away!

Mari. Both—both my parents lose?

Rob. May—

Mari. [*Shrieks.*] Don't curse me—but I cannot let thee
 go!— [*They go out, MARIAN clinging to her father.*]

Norris. [*Coming forward.*] Hold on, old Robert!

That's the mood! Hold on!

Rail at her! Spurn her! Curse her! Drive her mad!

The more she's fit for me. Use thy own flesh

Like carrion! Foot it from thee! Loathè it! I'm

The bird will banquet on't!—A father's blood

Must not be shed—although unwittingly—

For nothing!—That's the price which I have paid

For her dark hair, white skin, and shapely limbs;

Her lady face and fairly rounded form!

And I will have them;—nor do I prize them less

Because her heart would give them to another!

That is the feast of hate, to taste the joy

That's purchased at the cost of those we loathe!

And, now, to end the game successfully,

The close of which I pant for more and more,

The nearer that it draws! She must be mine!

'Tis well I kept aloof. I risk no blame
 For not disclosing what I was not ask'd
 To tell. And what my tale? *I saw old Robert
 Dragging the body in.* Well, what comes next?
*I saw him leave it; and, to put a trick
 Upon the old man, just in sport, although
 I'll own 'twas somewhat devilish in me, took
 Occasion of his absence, found his knife,
 And, knowing that the man was dead—stone dead—
 Stuck it, and left it where they saw it.* This
 I'll swear, and who can contradict me? Wolf
 Is far away! Thus, that he lives or dies
 Depends on me—on Marian, the choice
 To save or sacrifice her father's life.
 One only bar remains—her love for Edward,
 And that I've taken care to manage—spread
 Report his vessel founder'd in that storm,
 And he and all went down. I managed this
 In the village where I skulk'd. 'Twill soon be here,
 And then for Marian. Madden'd as she is—
 Her lover fancied drown'd, her father's life
 In jeopardy; she's certain to consent.
 Then, my confession, when the prison doors
 Will ope to him, and Marian's arms to me!

Enter STEPHEN.

Whither so fast, good Stephen?

Ste. Where is my master?

Nor. Fast in prison!

Ste. Where

His daughter?

Nor. Thou hast news,—and it is bad!

Ste. It is!—Young Edward's ship is cast away
 Upon the coast of France, and all the crew,
 'Tis said, have perish'd!

Nor. Know'st thou what thou say'st?

Ste. As thou that hear'st me say it!

Nor. All the crew?

Ste. All!

Nor. And thou art in search of Marian
 To tell her this?

Ste. I am!

Nor. I'll bring thee to her.

Stephen, I wonder at thy news!—The news
 Which I myself have spread! [*Aside.*] I'll bring thee to her.
 [*They go out.*]

SCENE II.—*The Outside of a Prison.*

MARIAN *before the gate, half-reclining on the ground.*

Mari. Here is my death-bed. Here I'll stretch myself

And die! I feel it! I am sure
 I am about to die. I could have borne
 The shame of the misdeed that was not mine—
 Submitted to it, as the will of Heaven,
 Incurring which I had not broke its will—
 But that the tie of nature should have snapp'd
 Along with that of reverence for Heaven—
 That where I found all love—all safeguard, once—
 I find all loathing—all desertion now!—
 That is too hard to bear! No kind of shame
 That ever made the cheek to redden, while
 The heart was free, had made me shrink from him—
 I would have cleaved to him amid the lightnings
 Of blasting looks, and voices, thundering scorns!—
 Shared the dark penance of his dungeon with him!
 Walk'd with him to the place of execution!
 Mounted it, step by step, along with him!
 And, all around him lowering, shone upon him,
 Till his last look, with reverence and love!
 They shall not shut me from his prison!—Have
 No right! I am his child! They should not heed
 His anger 'gainst me which they do not share,
 But I must bear alone! How high soe'er
 The surf doth run! They shall not keep me out!
 Within! within!—Who minds the gate?

Enter Jailer.

Jailer. What want you? .

Mari. Admittance to my father!

Jailer. 'Tis forbid!

Mari. Open the door a little.—Do, good sir,
 And let me speak with you—give me but a chink,
 I'll pass through it! [*Aside.*]

[*Jailer opens the gate, she tries to pass it, but is prevented. They advance struggling.*]

Jailer. What mean you? Are you mad?

Mari. I am! The fury all, without the trance
 That makes it bearable! The horror of
 The dream, without the sleep! Do you know aught
 About the ties of nature? Have you look'd
 Upon a living father, mother, brother,
 Or sister—or upon a living child
 That was your own? I have a living father,
 And he's within that prison—and I am here
 His living child, and yearn to go to him!
 And you say I cannot! Can you say it? Will you?
 Do you? You do not! Cannot! Will not! Oh,
 Admit me to my father!

Jailer. What's the use?

He'll only drive thee from him!

Mari. Let me in,

I'll find the use! Oh! do you think his heart

Could turn to stone, in a moment ? Harden so
To the very core, and 'gainst his only child ?
Admit me, and you'll see it still is flesh ;
All flesh—all beating flesh, and at the core,
Its inmost—tenderest—warmest part—his child !

Jailer. Poor girl !

Mari. You pity me !—Oh ! show me pity then—
The act it prompts !—without which, spite of all
Its melting looks and tones, its sighs and tears,
'Tis useless as a very beggar, who
Gives all things but the needed thing—relief !
You say "Poor girl !"—and you say true ! To be
An orphan !—to be friendless !—shelterless !
To go in rags, and they in tatters ! Hang
From morn till morn—from week's end unto week's end,
'Twixt sustenance and starvation !—all of these,
Together, but a little sprinkling make
Of suffering, to the torrent hurl'd on me !
I can't stand under it much longer.—Now !
My reason totters !—reels ! Another moment
I'm a lunatic—O save me from the jacket,
The straw—the whip—the chain—open the door !
Admit me to my father !

Jailer. It is hard

To have no option but the act of duty,
When the heart bleeds, and duty fain must let it.
Poor girl ! Though I consort with stone and iron,
My heart partakes not, so, of their condition,
That I can see and hear thee with such eyes
And ears, as walls and bars on misery turn !
Thou must endure—and Heaven support thee under it !
All are denied admittance to his cell,
And thou, I grieve to say it, chief of all !

[*Going.*

Mari. [*Stopping him.*] Stay ! Let me stop at the door of
his cell !—at the end

Of the passage that leads to it !—in the court on which
The passage opens !—on the stairs !—anywhere
Within the prison !—so that I may be
Under one roof with him ! Let me stop with you
At the gate !

Jailer. It may not be.

Mari. Show me the window of
His cell !—Is it that ?—or that ?—which is it ?

Jailer. Neither.

Mari. Is it that then ?

Jailer. 'Tis not in this quarter of
The prison.

Mari. Which quarter, then ?

Jailer. I may not tell thee.

Don't stop me, girl ! I can't stay longer with thee !
Thou quite unmann'st me !

Mari. Leave the door ajar—

A moment! Let me look into the prison! [*He shuts the door.*
 Go!—Thou dost weep indeed!—but 'tis pretence.
 Thou art no better than the grating bolt
 That at thy will is shot, and holds the door!
 I am helpless—hopeless!—Would I were the bolt,
 Door—walls—bars—anything but what I am!
 And I have put him there;—and if he dies,
 I hang him! Who are these that look at me,
 As they would strike me dead? I couldn't help it!
 My mother train'd me in the fear of God!
 I was forced to do it! Just as well might ye blame
 A rock to split, when riven by the lightning,
 As my lips to part, when in the name of Heaven
 The justice bade them ope and speak the truth!
 I am innocent!—don't spurn me—I am innocent!
 [*Retreats to the wall, and supports herself against it.*

Enter NORRIS and STEPHEN.

Nor. There!—Up to her!—Accost her!—Tell your news!
 What! is it loathing that I feel for her,
 Not love? It pleasures me to see her thus!
 Except for her I had not done it! That
 Is rankling at my heart—sets it in storm!
 I'm all for havoc! He should die—but then
 It were another murder on my soul!
 And I should lose the prize I've paid so much for!

Ste. Marian!

Mari. Well, Stephen! What of misery more?
 For sure it is your errand, by your looks!
 Tell me! You can add nothing to the cup
 Already that o'erflows! Is it of Edward?
 Is he dead?

Ste. He is! Drown'd on the coast of France.

Mari. I hear it—and I do not shed a tear!
 Nor feel the *want* to weep! I welcome it!
 'Tis good news! He has left a world of woe
 To him—to him—for what is woe to me,
 Were woe to him! Would I a heart I love,
 As I love his, should feel the blight mine feels?
 Would I put adders where I could not bear
 To have an insect sting? 'Tis well he's dead!
 The friends he leaves, should put on holiday,
 Not mourning clothes for him! His passing bell
 Should ring a peal, and not a knell! 'Tis best
 It is as it is. His welcome home had been
 "Heaven help you!"—not "Heaven bless you!"—Well, he's
 dead!

How was he drown'd?

Ste. His ship, they say, went down
 With all the crew.

Mari. With all the crew! He lies
 In a watery grave! How fresh he look'd the day

He went! What hope was in his eye, whose fire
 You would have thought would ne'er go out? He seem'd
 In speed to meet good fortune as a friend
 Already come in sight!—I see him now
 Stepping with gallant air into the boat,
 And looking at the sea, as 'twere a thing
 Stable as the solid earth!—My sailor lad!
 Young, comely, manly, good, and fond of me!
 I little thought the look would be my last
 Which promised I should see thee soon again.
 Thou diest in good time—'Tis years of woes
 Saved by a minute's pang! I thought just now
 I was past weeping! I *did* love him!—love him
 With all my will!—no portion of my heart
 But what was given to him—no portion on't
 I ever wish'd were back!

Nor. Now is my time!

Marian!

Mari. What! more?—Is there more misery?
 There's nothing left but death—I do not count
 Death misery!

Nor. I come to talk to thee
 Of life, not death!

Mari. Where is it?—show it me!
 Life is the opposite of death—a thing
 To be preferr'd to it!—show me *that* life!—
 For if thou mean'st such life as now I see,
 I had rather die than live!

Nor. I love thee, Marian!

Mari. Does any one love Marian?

Nor. I repeat

I love thee, Marian, wilt thou marry me?

Mari. Marry thee?—Yes; when they put on for me
 My wedding clothes—my shroud!—and lay me in
 My bridal bed—my grave!—Then I'll be wife
 To thee or any one!

Nor. What wouldst thou do
 To save thy father's life?

Mari. Anything!

Nor. What

To have it proved that he is innocent?

Mari. Anything!—pay the felon's penalty
 Myself!—Abide the gibbet!—Marry thee
 Now!—now!—If now thou couldst heave off for me
 That mountain on my heart—my father's plight!
 That, heavier on my soul—my father's sin!
 This didst thou do—and stood my lover there,
 Of whom to say, that, in his grave, he's dearer
 Than he was, ever, when in life to me,
 Is to say truth—I'd give to thee my hand!

Nor. I take it!—

What! draw'st thou back?

Mari. 'Tis but to pause a moment!
 No!—I'll see nothing but my father!—Think
 There's no one else in the world!—I'll see but him
 And the plight he lies in!—deeper—lonelier
 Than shipman at the bottom of the sea!
 Canst thou do this thou sayest?

Nor. Yes!

Mari. Thou'lt save
 My father's life? Thou'lt prove him innocent?

Nor. I will!

Mari. The day thou dost it, I am thine!

Nor. Give me thy hand upon it!—Draw'st thy hand back
 Again!

Mari. No!—There!—One moment!—Edward!—There!

[*Faints in his arms.*]

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*The Shore.*

Enter NORRIS.

I stare at my good fortune! Things that seem'd
 To bar my wishes, help them! First the stop,
 Was put to Robert's flight; then his committal—
That was the most perverse; but now he's free.
 My frank confession oped the dungeon-door,
 At cost alone of smart reproof to me,
 For what his worship call'd a wicked trick.
 And now fair Marian, with her own consent,
 Is mine! This very day we go to church!
 I would it were to any other place!
 I dream'd of her last night. I thought it was
 Our wedding day, and, to the church-door, I
 Was leading her. 'Twas shut! I knock'd at it.
 One answer'd from within, "I must not enter!"
 Whereat I shudder'd, for I knew the voice.
 And yet again I knock'd. When oped the door,
 And, fear-congealing sight! a spectre glared
 Upon me! 'Twas my father!—and he said,
 "It is forbid—thou must not enter here!"
 I woke. It was the first night I had slept—
 To call it sleep—since that unlucky night.
 Oh! may I never sleep such sleep again!

[*Goes out.*]

SCENE II.—*Robert's Cottage.*

Enter ROBERT.

Rob. Better I had died! My child has given her life

To cherish mine ! E'en while I look at her,
 I see her wasting !—and what aggravates
 The pang to watch her fall a prey to death
 So fast, is the sweet uncomplaining patience
 With which she bears the tooth that's gnawing her,
 Working its way into the quick ! She looks
 On me the cause of the inextricable,
 Unsufferable strait she has fallen into,
 As one to pity rather than to blame !
 This is her wedding day !—far better call'd
 Her funeral day ! I have left no means untried
 To tempt him to forego his claim—he cries
 "I've paid the price, and what I've bought I'll take !"
 While prayers awaken wrath, and not remorse,
 And his eye lowers till I think I see
 His heart laid bare, with evil at the core.
 The hour !—I must awaken her. Her eyes
 Were closed when last I look'd !—before the time
 I would not have them open on the day
 They'll see at last too soon !—she has waked of herself !
 Is up, and dress'd, and smiling with a cheek
 More kin to death than life !—My Marian !

Mari. [*Having entered.*] My father !—what's the matter that
 you turn

Your eyes away ? You falter when you speak !
 Father ! be cheerful—happy—look upon me !

Rob. My girl, don't smile !

Mari. What my face does, my father,
 My heart does !—It is calm !—Yea, cheerful !—not
 That it lacks cause for grief—but has more cause
 For gladness ! I have done what Heaven approves—
 My duty !—sacrificed a little thing—
 Much in itself, but in comparison
 Little—to gain a great thing—to preserve
 My father's life !—I should smile !—Let me smile,
 And smile along with me !

Rob. My child—my child—
 That talk'd to me like an angel !—clung to me !
 Knelt to me to persuade me to forbear !
 And, like a fiend, I would not heed, but did
 The evil thing, whence all this ruin grew !
 My child, who loving me, as she truly said,
 And since has proved, beyond her life—preserved
 Her reverence for Heaven, when, lacking that,
 She might have saved me !—My poor child, that I
 For doing so her duty, as she ought,
 Thrust from me—used with violence—yea, suffer'd
 To trail along the street, hanging to me !—
 Whom I was nigh to curse !—I did not, Marian !
 Indeed I did not curse thee !—A child so used !—
 To blast her happiness—life—everything,
 For me—and do it with a smile !

Mari. My father!

No more of this, beseech thee—These are thoughts
That cannot profit us! and they awaken
Others, 'twere better for our peace we suffer'd
To sleep!—for they may madden!—Give me thy hand!
Don't speak!—My brain reel'd round just now!—
'Tis over!—Father, go to the door and see
If he be coming.

Rob. Who?

Mari. The bridegroom, father.

Since we're to marry, as well marry now

As any other time—O save me!—Hide me!—

[*Rushing to her father, hides her face in his breast.*]

Enter EDWARD.

Edw. My Marian!—My girl!—My love!—My bride!

And is thy joy to see me back so great
It overcomes thee?—Marian, from the hour
We hoisted sail to bring me back to thee,
The wind has never veer'd nor flagg'd.—We've had
A merry run of good twelve knots an hour!—
Nothing—sheet, halyard—but the helm to 'tend to,
As though the vessel with my heart were racing,
That kept before it still!—O turn to me!—
Look at me!—Speak to me!—The face and voice,
I have heard and seen a thousand miles away—
Now that I'm near thee—within reach of thee—
Touching thee, Marian!—let me see and hear!
Has she not power to speak or move?

Rob. My boy,—

The sight of thee, so sudden, overcomes her.

Edw. And does she love me better?—Marian!—

Sweet—constant—fond—could I believe so fond?—

'Twas never thus with thee before at meeting!

Unloose the hands that clasp thy father's neck—

Or let me do it for thee—till I fold thee

To my fond, faithful—my adoring heart,

That yearns to feel thee near it!—Marian!

Know'st thou not Edward's hand?—Does she resist me?

Is it not joy that works upon her so?

Does my return give pain?—Is it a thing

Unwelcome?—Am I loved no longer by her?

Am I forgotten?—

Mari. Edward—no!—no!—no!

Thou'rt not forgotten.

Edw. No?—nor loved no longer?

Mari. Nor loved no longer?—loved more dear than ever!—
Than ever, Edward!

Edw. Marian! My love!

My life!—the ship is on her course again!

Steady! There's nought ahead!—Fool that I was

To fancy breakers!—Come, my faithful girl!

Sit on my knee and talk to me! 'Tis long
 Since we have talk'd together, Marian!
 Dost thou hold off? I have been so long away,
 You are ashamed to sit upon my knee.
 Well! There! What you like I like! Though you've sat
 Often upon my knee. Well! I have made
 My luckiest voyage!—our pence have grown to pounds!

Mari. We heard that you were shipwreck'd!

Edw. Ay!

Mari. Were drown'd!

Edw. You took me for my ghost!—no wonder, girl,
 You ran away from me! O now I see!
 We've not touch'd ground we did not wish to touch!—
 Nor shipp'd a sea since first we hoisted sail!
 And now we marry, Marian!—What's the matter?
 How ill you look?—What's this?—You shrink from me!
 Has she been ailing, father?—Where are her eyes?—
 I left her with a rose upon her cheek,
 Where is it?—That is not the form I clasp'd
 A month ago!—What's fallen? Something! Ay!
 Something! What is it?—Both are silent!—Then
 Something I know has fallen! To look at you
 Is enough—enough!—'twill drive me mad!—I am mad!
 Tell me the truth!—Nay then I'll seek for it
 Where I'm more like to find it.

Mari. Stop! Come back!—

No!—Stay!—Forgive me, Edward! [*Falling on her knees.*]

Edw. Marian!

Forgive thee!—Why? For what?

Mari. Don't ask!—To sea!

On shipboard, and set sail, whate'er the wind,—
 Anything, Edward, but the shore!—To sea!—
 Rocks, breakers, sands, are nothing!—all the perils
 Of leaks, dismasting, canvas blown to threads,
 Are nothing!—Foundering!—The dismall'st plight,
 That ever barque was in, are nothing!—Yea
 Drowning, with thoughts of going deeper down
 Than ever plummet sounded, or of graves
 Made of the throats of sea-monsters, that dog
 The fated vessel!—Leap into them sooner
 Than trust thy feet on land!—To sea!—to sea!

Edw. What mean you?

Mari. I will tell while I can!

Edw. Rise up then, and don't kneel to me!

Mari. Forgive me!

Edw. For what?

Mari. Ay, that's the thing, you can't forgive me
 Until you know for what, and when you know it,
 Will you forgive me then?—You will not! Yet,
 Were it my last breath that I speak with to thee,
 I love thee dear as ever!—dearer!—dearer!
 I love thee dearer than I ever did!—

Edw. Then where's the harm ?

Mari. Where ?—everywhere !—The sun
Has turn'd to ice !—There is a haze in the sky,
Chilly and thick, that ne'er will clear away !
The earth is wither'd grass, leaves, flowers, and all !
Women and men are changed, all cheer and comfort
Departed from their faces and their tongues,
To me !—for thou that madest all these to me
Art lost !—

Edw. Am I not faithful to thee still ?

Mari. Thou art, and I am faithful still to thee !
But !—

Edw. What ?

Mari. Oh, father !

Rob. Well thou mayst reproach me !

Mari. No !—no ! I don't reproach thee ; tell it him—
Stop ! he will know it soon enough—He's here !

Enter NORRIS and others, dressed as for a Wedding.

Nor. Marian !—What ! Edward living !—Edward here !

Edw. It dawns upon me ! Dawns ?—'Tis open day !—
A stormy one, the sky all black, the sea
All foam, all things portending shipwreck ! shipwreck
Already come ! binnacle wash'd away !
Rudder unshipp'd ! not a mast standing ! nothing
But the hull ! the lonesome, melancholy hull !
With mountains breaking over it !—She's changed !
She's false ! she's lost ! I live, and she is lost !

Nor. Come !

Edw. Will she go to him before my face ?
She will !—She does !—Will she go forth with him ?
Go forth with him to church, and leave me here ?
She's gone !—Come death ! Well ! I'm ashore again—
That which I long'd for every hour in the day !
Every minute !—Pray'd for ! dreamt upon ! lived upon !—
More than on food or drink, with hope to get it,
I have got at last !—I am on shore again !
Better be at the bottom of the sea !
What's to be done ?—Can anything be done ?—
My destiny's too hard to bear, and yet
I must bear it !—To be mad ! O to be mad !—
How can my senses stand it ?—What are they made of ?
Why don't they go to pieces ?—Not one plank
Holding by another ! All toss'd here and there
In splinters !—Splinters !—Come, there's comfort in
The knowledge of the cause that wreck'd the ship.
That I will force from her, and then I'll leave her—
Leave everything !—Leave her, leave everything ! [*Goes out.*]

SCENE THE LAST.—*The outside of a Church.*

Enter Clergyman, NORRIS, MARIAN, ROBERT, and others.

Clergyman. These nuptials are not things of lucky omen.

Nor. I pay no heed to omens !

Clergyman. Marriage is

A holiday—a day of gladness, though

We drop a tear in't !—Bright looks are its favours !

Lightness of gait, and ease of carriage, are

Its proper dress !—This maid has none of them !

Nor. She weds of her free will.

Clergyman. You are the bridegroom ?

Nor. There stands her father—question him !

Clergyman. Methinks

You look not like a bridegroom ; no, nor speak !

There's sullenness upon your brow and tongue,

Care at the heart's core, if not something worse !

His marriage-day is still the merriest

A lover keeps. It is his harvest-home,

When blights, and winds, and autumn floods are 'scaped,

And all the venture of his tillage housed

With song and dance and thankful merry-making.

'Tis strange ! but it is your affair, not mine.

You are her father !—Gives the maid her hand

Of her free will ?

Rob. She does ; against her choice,

She gives her hand, although it breaks her heart !

Your Reverence must have heard, he holds her promise

His price for service render'd unto me,

By which her hand she gives, disjoining it

From her heart, long given to another. Tears,

Entreaties, prayers, all means I have tried, to shake

His stubborn purposes, and to pity bend him—

All thrown away ! Yet have resolves the strongest

Given way, at last ; perhaps the hour, the place,

Thy sacred presence, these perhaps may give

A sway to that was powerless before !

Look on me, Norris ! I'm a father ; see

To what a strait I'm brought, upon my knees

Before thee in the dust ! Turn to my child—

Upon her death-bed could she look more white ?

More ghastly, more like death ? She loves thee not !

To save her father—a father less to her

Than she a child to him—she's in the plight

That brings her hither ! If she marries thee,

It is not with her heart ! Don't take her hand !

Take that, thou takest her life along with it !

Thou lay'st a corpse upon thy bridal bed,

And not a bride ! O, spare her ! spare my child !

Spare me in her !—thysself ! forego thy claim !

Release her from the word she will not break,
 Though keeping it her thread of life will snap!
 Release her from it!—Give a young girl her life!—
 Preserve the remnant of an old man's life!
 And make thyself, if not a happy man,
 At least a man contented with himself;
 Who else, must needs become a verier wretch,
 Than any that he makes!—

Nor. I am here to wed!—

Clergyman. Stern man, look here!—thine eyes may serve the place

Of ears, no need of them to learn the case
 Of that poor suppliant! What hast thou heard
 Of misery that e'er came up to that?
 Plead tears as strong, as she without them plead?
 Sighs? groans?—all things that serve as tongues to grief?
 She looks despair, beyond what e'er was told
 By doleful sound! Art thou a man, or what?
 What keeps thee rock, when all around thee melt?
 Shake! fall to pieces at the spectacle
 Which most ought thee to move? Hast thou no touch
 Of Earth or Heaven, which all men have beside?
 So to contrast with all? Thou livest and breathest—
 By Him thou livest and breathest by, I adjure thee
 Forego the hand which He forbids thee take!

Nor. I am the bridegroom, there's the bride; she weds
 Of her free will; though hearts go not with hands,
 No reason why they may not follow them.
 I love her—I will have her—and I take her!

Edw. [*Rushing in.*] Angel! I know it all! I thought before,
 I could not love thee better than I did,
 But now I love thee more than e'er I did!
 Self-sacrificed to save thy father's life!
 The fairest barque that ever mounted wave,
 From duty, run upon the foulest shore!
 Art thou a man! [*to NORRIS.*]—O reverend sir, to proof,
 Without the church, let me his manhood put,
 And see if in my frame that fibre lives,
 So basely weak, 'twill yield, till at my feet
 His claim upon the maiden he renounce!
 It is not reverence to Heaven, to stand
 And see it outraged in the thing it loves,
 Through reverence to Heaven's servant or Heaven's house!
 Norris, come forth;—

Nor. Yes! when I lead, a wife,
 Thy Marian from the church.

Edw. She is not mine!—
 I do forego the maid, do thou forego
 Her hand! If hate for me—loathing to see
 The maiden mine—constrains thee to an act
 To which a murder were a gentle deed,

I give her up ! Pluck up my hopes, although
 Their roots have struck to my heart's core, and cast
 Away that they shall never flower again,
 But wither, die, and rot !—Oh, give her up,
 And take whate'er by years of toil I've made !
 If that sufficeth not, take me along
 To labour for thy gain to my life's end !
 To do thy bidding, whatsoe'er it be,
 On land or sea—how far soe'er away !
 To be thy journeyman will labour through
 The four-and-twenty hours, without repose
 Or food, and set to work when they are out—
 Only give up the maid, her word—her peace—
 Her patience—reason—life !

Clergyman. No violence !—Or is her reason gone,
 Or she is in a trance !

Mari. 'Tis coming !—

Nor. What ?

Clergyman. Peace !

Mari. How it scowls all around ! The sea is black
 As the sky ! From head to head as black as ink !
 There comes the wind ! You see !—that streak of white
 Along the horizon !—it grows larger !—See !—
 And larger !—That's the wind ! 'Tis coming on,
 Pacing the waves, and stirring up the spray,
 As horses do the dust when they're in speed !
 You hear it now !—and now the sea is white
 As it was black before !

Rob. Something like this
 Occurr'd last night, but I aroused her, and
 Recall'd her to herself.

Nor. This is no time
 For list'ning to a dream !

Clergyman. Speak'st thou again !
 I'll make them put thee from the church by force !
 I'll hear the dream out, if it be a dream !
 If that her senses are unsettled, you're
 Forbid to take her hand !—I charge you, peace !

Mari. It lightens ! but—'tis distant !—And it thunders—
 Only you cannot hear it !—for the sea
 That, now, begins to roar ! You'll hear it, though,
 Anon !—'Tis coming, listen ! Hold your breath—
 Don't speak ! I heard a gun !—There 'tis
 Again ! And there's the ship, rounding the head,
 Rising and pitching, and no pity takes
 The storm upon her ; but more furious waxes—
 And billow after billow, fore-top high,
 Breaks over her ! She strikes ! She's fast ! She's lost !
 And now the waves do with her what they will !
 She's gone to pieces !—Pieces !—What is this ?
 A body wash'd on shore, and Norris there,

Rifling it! Ha! he stops!—He is alarm'd!
 He sees that life is in it! What is that
 He does? He has unclasp'd a knife! He means
 To murder the poor man!—He will!—He does!
 Stop! Norris!—'tis thy father!

Nor. Furies! fiends!

What mean you?

Clergyman. What mean *you*? The blood is gone
 Even from thy very lips! while all beside
 Look as they look'd before! Thou'rt a bad man!

Nor. What heeds a raving girl?

Mari. Where have I been?—
 The church? Oh! I remember!—All is right!—
 Here, Norris, take my hand!

[*They approach the altar—WOLF rises—NORRIS lets
 go MARIAN'S hand, and retreats several paces—the
 rest pause.*]

Nor. Hell! what is here?

Like something from a grave, or from the sea
 Cast up untimely and unnaturally;
 Or, worse, a prisoner from the evil place,
 If such there be, let out to harrow me
 Before my time—affright me into madness!

Edw. Speak not!—Observe!

Nor. Wolf!—Wolf!—It is his eyes—
 Features—but not the life that moved in them—
 His form without his blood! Is it a thing
 That breathes, or only would be thought to breathe?
 Wolf! I would rush upon it, but my fears
 Are bolts that pin me to the spot! Is it come
 To tell upon me? Cause of blame to him
 I gave not; he went cramm'd with gold away!

Edw. [*To Clergyman.*] Do you hear? That man has been
 a partner with him
 In some black deed!

Wolf. I have fled over sea, over land,
 To get away from it! It follows me!
 I have plunged into riot—I have tried
 What solitude would do! It talks to me!
 I see it in the dead of night as well
 As in the noon of day. 'Tis only here
 I have got a respite from it yet! In crowds
 I have been alone, with it glaring upon me,
 Gnashing its teeth, and yelling in mine ears!
 But there's another here that comes between
 With mild regards, and placid shining face,
 And gentle voice, which makes, albeit so soft,
 My torturers unheard, crying "Repent!
 Confess! Repent! Confess!"

Nor. Confess!

Wolf. I will

Repent, I will confess!—then am I free!

I am a murderer.

Nor. Be thou the fiend—I'll know thee!

[Rushing up and seizing him.]

Wolf!

Wolf. Norris!—What, has it been following thee?

Nor. Peace!

Wolf. *[Furiously.]* But there is no peace! It howls, and howls,

No foot is fleet enough to distance it,
To 'scape the horror of its teeth;—the bloodhound,

No stream that you can wade will clear thee from,

That never gives you respite!—except here!

Here is a chance! This is a place methinks

He cannot enter; he has hunted me

Till he has driven me wild, but since I'm here,

His bay methinks begins to die away.

Words have been whisper'd me, at hearing which

'Twas told me he would slacken in his chase.

"Repent! Confess!" Those were the words I heard.

I will!—I do!—I am a murderer.

Nor. Coward, where is my gold?

Wolf. All clotted o'er,

Corroded, crumbled with the old man's blood,

Which thou lett'st out, and I did leave to spill—

Nor. Fiend!

Wolf. Do not rave at me! I did not know

It was your father!

Edw. Hear ye?

Nor. Villain!—die!

With a lie in thy throat!

[Stabs WOLF.]

Clergyman. Stop, wretch!

Wolf. Thou hast murder'd me!

And but for thee I had not murder'd him!

But in my soul's strait on the brink of death,

I'll show thee pity as I hope to me

That mercy will be shown!—"Repent! Confess!"

I hear not now the hound!—nor wilt thou hear it,

If there be mercy for a parricide!

[Dies.]

Nor. You would not listen to a lunatic!

Clergyman. At least, unhappy! thou'rt a murderer!

Nor. Which of you would not kill a mad dog? Come!

You have no right to hold me! Show me first

Your warrant, without which you cannot take

A man that's free to prison!—Just as well

Hang me without a trial!—Let me breathe!

Give me a moment's pause!—Let my arms free!

Oh, could I use them now! The blackest curse

That lips can utter—heart conceive—alight

On all who enter there!—May the roof fall

And bury you alive—may it be in flames!